world FILM news

YOUR GUIDE to NEW and GENERAL RELEASE FILMS

AN INNOCENT IN HOLLYWOOD
HALF-AN-HOUR WITH PUDOVKIN
CAGNEY—KING OF THE CORNER BOYS
FROM NELL GWYN TO QUEEN VICTORIA

TOD SLAUGHTER
RUSSELL FERGUSON
JOHN GRIERSON
GLEN NORRIS
BASIL WRIGHT

OCTOBER 1s

REALIST FILM UNIT

1937

★

Productions completed

THE LEAGUE AT WORK

THE SMOKE MENACE

CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

In hand

A SURVEY OF SCOTLAND TO-DAY

and

A FILM ON PAINTING

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FOR 1937

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Anyone who would like a film show arranged, or who wishes to borrow copies of the films, should write to the British Commercial Ga Association, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1, if outside London, or the Gas Light and Coke Company, Horseferry Road, S.W.1, for London

"WHAT a THROAT for a RAZOR!"

HOLD on to your SEATS

here comes

TOD SLAUGHTER!

Hissed, booed, cheered by gallery and pit all over Britain, last outstanding representative of the real peoples' theatre, Tod Slaughter talks to

RUSSELL FERGUSON

THIS will interest you.

In 1911 I had a farce running called *There and Back*, and do you know who were playing in it? Malcolm Keene, G. H. Mulcaster, and Leslie Banks. It was my company, *There and Back* was the farce.

When Leslie Banks first joined me, I tried to turn him into a low comedian in a farcical sketch called *The Hollow Baby*. It's a good job he had the sense to tell me I was wrong.

Ronald Colman was working for me in 1910, in a military drama called *Second to None*, and with him was Herbert Marshall.

That's how the top liners learned the business, in such companies as mine. Play anything: Ruritanian things, comedies, dramas, anything. The school of experience—an actor in the old days made no difference between one kind of play and another. Look them up, the top liners—Charlie Chaplin, the Barrymores, Ruth Chatterton, George Arliss, and you'll find they learned the business in the old school, acting in every sort of play. That's where they get their power of command, their timing, their technique, Evelyn Laye and Flora Robson and Robertson Hare and Stan Laurel and Paul Muni, and dozens more. Even take young Robert Donat, and you'll find he was with Sir Frank Benson about five or six years ago.

It was when I came back from the War that I looked round and decided to play drama. Yes, I suppose you can call them melodramas if you like. But I call them just dramas. I could see they would be forgotten unless somebody did something about it. Nobody was doing them, or likely to. I cut my teeth on them, nearly forty years ago, and from about 1905 till about 1909 I managed a company that did *Maria Marten*, *No Mother to Guide Her*, *A Warning to Women*, *A Wrecker of Men* and *The Seal of Silence*. We did a 48-week tour, and we never left a theatre without booking a return date. So I knew all the old plays, and after the war I put them on at the Elephant and Castle. The people loved them. Visitors began to come from the West End. I had distinguished people every other night. Some of them candidly said they came for amusement, but one and all they forgot to laugh.

They were making discoveries. They found that this was good, they were enjoying it. They found that melodrama was damned good drama, and they felt the power of the company. It was like a drug, and they yielded to it. They began to see that this old stuff is not just something antique, left over from last century. They began to make comparisons, some of them, and to see that it's very much alive, in fact, it will never die. The situations, the lines, the real theatre, can be seen undiluted in the old plays, and these are the elements that give the theatrical thrill in the modern plays.

Take Edgar Wallace—he came over to the Elephant. I had a box for him, but he would not sit in it. I had to go up and shift four people out of the front row of the gallery, for him and his party.

He got up on the stage at the finish and told us why. He said, "The first coppers I earned, selling newspapers as a boy, were spent on a seat in the gallery of the Elephant."

Doesn't that show how Edgar Wallace learned what to write for the stage? And what did he write—*The Frog*, *The Ringer*, *The Squeaker*, *On the Spot*—thrillers, they call them. Tip-top stuff too. Why aren't they called melodramas? If I put on *The Frog*, old boy, in my own way, people would say "Tod Slaughter at it again."

EDGAR Wallace saw that West End theatre was hitting the slide. He knew what people want, the real theatrical thrill; crime and punishment, mystery, the villain brought to justice, the elements of his plays were in the old tradition. His exits and curtains, the technique of the writing, the acting, the production, all in the old tradition. Edgar Wallace knew how to create dramatic thrills. He learned all the recipes in his youth. He cooked the stuff up a bit, with comedy and so on, I served it up raw, but it's the same stuff.

The theatre went all to pot, after the War, the characters all sat about and talked, it was all cocktails and cigarettes. It was amusing and witty, but the drama was dying on its feet. Edgar Wallace went right back to the main stream, pistol shots, the shadows of the noose, the scream in the dark, fear and suspicion, the good old plum-duff.

What about Noel Coward, didn't he do the same thing? What's *Cavalcade?* You can hardly call it melodrama, but what else is it? It's revue and a spectacle, but it's the drama in it that gives it the kick.

Tod Slaughter (contd.)

Take Ivor Novello, who's just done it again with *The Crest of the Wave*. He's about the best example of the lot. He puts on four big successes one after the other, and we wonder how he does it. It's simple. They're musical thrillers, that means they are melodramas with music and comedy. The hero, the villain, the sweetheart, the inheritance, or the jewels, it's the good old stuff. When you should call it drama and when you should call it melodrama, I don't know. I suppose it depends on how it's diluted, with music or with discussion or with comedy. I suppose when you take it neat, you call it melodrama. Anyway it's the same stuff.

GEORGE Arliss came into the Elephant, and when he came round he said, "Number one dressing room? You aspire, old boy, you aspire. Take me to number seven, I never got further than that." So I did, and he said, "You have five fellows dressing here, I see. When I was here there were seven places. And my place was just here," he said, pointing to a chair, "and I earned twenty-five bob a week."

I loved him for that. He knew the value of experience, he was proud of it. He knows drama. God knows how much he's made out of *The Green Goddess*, and that's the good old stuff, as ever was. You remember the first film he appeared in, or about the first. It was away back in 1924. He was the villain. He was killed at the end, and you saw the flames devour his soul. But at the beginning, the scene is the Louvre, and the hero and heroine are looking at the pictures. They pass a small round-shouldered figure in a black cloak, peering close into a picture, quizzing it through a glass. He turns round and smiles a lovely smile. He looks like Satan. You are scared out of your wits, but you can't take your eyes off him. You never can, whether he is the lawyer or the doctor or the general. He takes command, right from the moment when he sails in and says "Ah, my dear duchess, how are you?" He knows his job because he learned it in the old hard school, and he plays it in the old style, and he's terrific, and everybody loves him.

No side. There's no side about the top liners who started at the bottom. Herbert Marshall has my photo on his dressing table, and I'll tell you why. After the war he came into my office in khaki, on crutches. He said "Tod, I'm finished." I said "What's the matter, Herbert?" He said, "Well, look at me. I'll never act again. Lost a leg." "So I see," I said, "but you're getting another one, aren't you?" "Oh, yes," he says, "but what's the use of an actor with a wooden leg? John Silver is about all I'm fit for." I said "Don't be silly, Herbert. Come back here immediately your leg's fitted."

Well, he did, and I put him straight into a farce called *Betsy*, which opened in the Richmond Hippodrome. He had to get about, in this show, up stairs and down stairs. Well, he made a hit. He told me the first round of applause set him up. From that moment, he knew it was a go. And that's why he has my photo on his dressing table.

I've just finished filming *The Ticket of Leave Man*. It's a lovely film. In one scene I have Marie Wright with me. I'm just out, and working a con trick, collecting for the Prisoners' Aid Society. Marie plays the dear old lady whom I separate from her money: easy for her, for Marie's a dear old lady if ever there was one. Well, when we shoot, I have a beautiful oily speech, and Marie says, "You've touched my 'eart." "Cut," says George King, who was directing. "Sorry," says Marie, "not like me to drop an aitch, I forgot the character." "That's all right, dear," I said, "these things are soon remedied in this business. You get as many shots as you like." We shot the whole thing again, and of course Marie was perfect. She turns to George King, and says, "Mr. King, had I an 'eart just now, or had I a heart?" "Marie," says George, "you had a beautiful, kind, loving heart."

Jimmie Turner, Jack Buchanan's manager, tells an 'eart story about Beerbohm Tree. Turner used to be with him. Sir Herbert had Herbert Waring in his company for a show, a grand old actor of the old school. Waring sees the proof of the playbill and goes quietly to Tree. "Herbert," he says in his richest tones, "I have just seen what purports to be the playbill of this show. I notice that, except your own, all the names are exactly the same size. Now, having regard to my experience——" Tree said, "Sorry, Herbert, but it would only cause jealousy." "Then do you think you could print my name last, with the word 'and'—you know—so and so, so and so, so and so, so and so *And* Herbert Waring?" Tree says, "Herbert, it's 'ard to give the 'and where the 'art could never be."

I was never with Tree. I have played Shakespeare with Clive Currie and I've played in every other kind of play. I've broadcast and televised and made records, and I've produced about 380 plays myself, 27 pantomimes, 3 revues, 57 sketches. I've been the dame in a pantomime and the clown in a circus ring.

I'M fifty-three. How old are you? Really? Well, you're lucky you're not a few years younger, for if you had been born a little later you would probably have been a sissy, like the rest of the young chaps nowadays. In one company recently I had several young men. Clever, talented, smart, willing, charming fellows—the only trouble was they were all sissies. They were no use. They could do everything but get tough. At the finish up, I had to get down to it myself. I got down to about thirty-two, not bad for a man of fifty-three. I was supposed to be twenty-eight.

The revival of the old popular dramas after the war is what I regard as my most important work—I always play them straight, you know, I have never burlesqued them. That would be madness. *Young England* did me a great deal of harm. Here was I doing a double job, providing the people with real meat, and at the same time carrying the clever ones along with the rest. Playing the old stuff sincerely, and succeeding. Along comes *Young England*, they play it for laughs, and knock me back five years. But *Young England* died a natural death, and *Sweeney Todd* lives a natural life. I'm just back from five months in Manchester doing rep. All the old favourites. They loved it. Now you can't keep on, and keep on keeping on, unless you have the stuff.

I'll tell you a funny thing. You know that American paper which runs star-popularity ballots? Well, I've got a number! Me, Sweeney Tod Slaughter, the demon actor. I have a number. They've only seen two of my pictures.

Wait till you see *The Ticket of Leave Man*. A lovely film.

Tod Slaughter, in the George King production, *Ticket of Leave Man*

EDITORIAL

The grip on criticism

An article on another page draws attention to the action of Columbia Pictures in banning the critic of the *Film Weekly* from Columbia shows. At a time when the position of American film companies is under Parliamentary review, this is an event of some interest. The *Film Weekly* is easily the best of the fan magazines, with a reputation for independent criticism rare among commercial film journals. Time and again it has earned the respect of this paper for its public spirit and its courage. Indeed it is well equipped to watch the interests of the British film going public and in this sense it may be said to play an important national role. Through such a paper the British public is guided as to what is best and what is worst in American films and alien influences can be estimated and kept in good order.

It is curious, to say the least, that so important an organ should be prevented from carrying out its task. We have seen the uproar which attended the ban on *The Times* correspondent in Berlin; yet here is the more grotesque case of a foreign organisation banning an organ of British public opinion, and on our own territory. We do not question but that more will be heard of it when Parliament meets.

The larger issue is of course that free criticism is, by one method or another, being prevented throughout the film world. The trade's hospitalities tend to weaken the fibre of the critic and the arguments which emanate from the advertising columns are seldom less than weighty. Frequently we hear of film renters threatening to take their complaints about unfavourable criticisms "to higher quarters"; and even Lord Beaverbrook allowed himself to be licked on such an issue when, because of a Belfrage comment, advertising was withdrawn from the *Sunday Express*.

In Newcastle

Up in the sad town of Newcastle, they have been cutting the credits on the short films. Main title and on you go, without a word for the people who worked, more or less laboriously, to give the theatres this relief element in their programmes. A Mr. Dixon Scott, manager of the Haymarket theatre, writes to Newcastle's *Evening Chronicle* to defend this mutilation of short films, and says that "not one person in a hundred cares a rap about these credits."

Perhaps so. But one person quite certainly does and that is the film-maker. It is his mark and his vanity, and the tradition of all showmanship, whether in painting, publishing, or the theatre, regards these marks and vanities as proper and necessary to creative work. In the disconsolate business of making films for such as Mr. Dixon Scott, the poor film-maker must have something to nerve him.

One practical point is worth taking. Commercial film operators are an unimaginative lot if they do not take as much pride in their shorts as they do in their features; and poorer still if they cannot see the future advantage of building up young reputations. Shorts producers should, in any case, look to their interests by contracting on a no-cut basis and seeing to it that contracts are kept. The recognition of their work and their commercial advantage depend on it. They have the further method open to them of keeping their films out of any theatres which treat them so ill. A thoughtless fellow, this Mr. Dixon Scott.

Lobbying

Four months ago we described the circumstances under which the British Films Advancement Movement was formed. We had some doubts as to whether Parliamentary Committees should put themselves under the suspicion of being financed from commercial sources and asked specifically that the financial backing behind the promotion of this Movement should be revealed. We have received no answer and in fact this Advancement Movement has been singularly inactive since our article appeared.

Lest there be any mistake, we must again raise this question of principle and ask if Parliamentary groups should put themselves in the position of receiving funds from commercial sources. It is becoming one of the observations of Wardour Street that Members of Parliament are not unwilling to undertake Parliamentary lobbying for particular film groups; and the advances do not always come from the film people.

We do not say there is dishonesty in this; and Members of Parliament must be free to lobby for what they believe. But the more we think of our legislators tied—by war or any other chests—to particular interests, the more disagreeable do the possibilities appear.

* * * *

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AND TELEVISION PROGRESS
(INCORPORATING CINEMA QUARTERLY)

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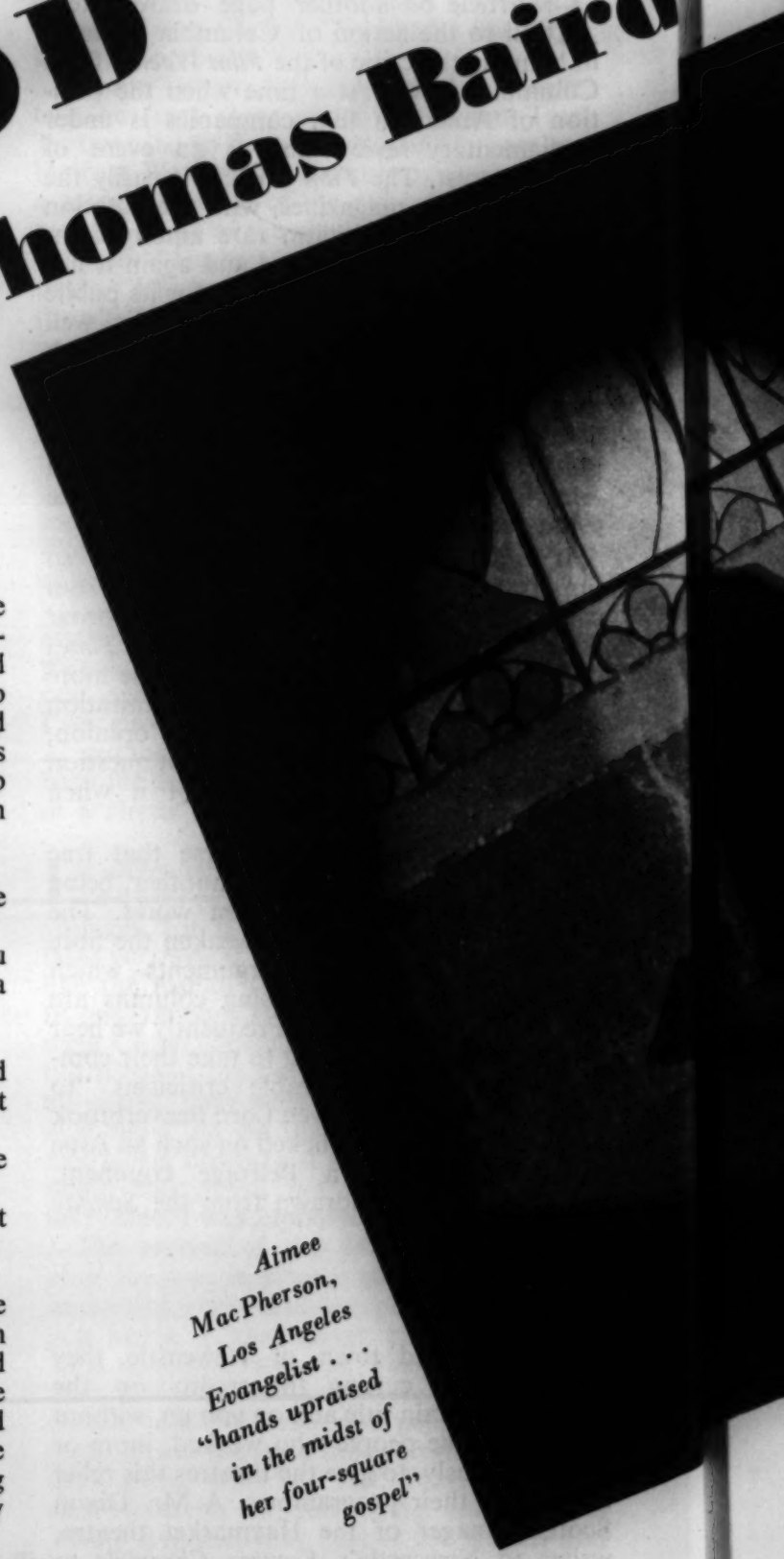
Editorial Office Oxford House,
9-15 Oxford St., W.1
Telephone: Gerrard 6080

Business Office 217 Temple Chambers,
Temple Avenue, E.C.4
Telephone: Central 2483

AN INNOCENT IN HOLLYWOOD

by Thomas Baird



Aimee MacPherson, Los Angeles Evangelist . . . "hands upraised in the midst of her four-square gospel"

"ONE return ticket to Hollywood."

"You mean to Los Angeles don't you?"

"No, I'm going to Hollywood. What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing much with the return bit! But you can't take a ticket to Hollywood."

"Why not?"

"Because there ain't no station there."

True, the train goes no further than Los Angeles.

It gallops down from the mountains and streaks across the desert. It pushes past orange groves where the fruit hangs ripening in the sun. The sun is always shining in California. Rain is most unusual. There are palm trees in the streets of Pasadena. There are eucalyptus trees by the railroad. Soon you can feel a city approaching. Houses creep down to the railway line. Then factories. A chimney or two. Some smoke and a little dirt. We rush between high buildings. Los Angeles.

There are still six miles to Hollywood. It is dusk as the taxi turns into Hollywood Boulevard; the sky is growing dark but there is a blaze of light from a dozen cinemas, from the shop windows, from the hotels, from the electric signs. It is like a fairground. I like fairgrounds at night time.

Out of the taxi the air is warm and dry; the sky is like velvet and search-lights scar it like silver brocade.

Next morning I rush to my hotel window. It is raining. A heavy Scots mist. This is most unusual for California. There is no sun, just a grey bank of mist hiding the hills and making last night's fairground look even more sad than a fairground usually looks in the morning. Eight hours later it is still raining. Eight days later it is still raining. This is most unusual. On the ninth day it clears up. It takes a most unusual wind to perform the feat. The sun comes out, yellow first, then blinding white. Colour creeps back into the landscape. Coloured awnings drop over windows. Billboards gleam in their true blues and reds. Egyptian temples announce that Garbo loves Taylor; Chinese pagodas tell the world A Star is Born; windows open and radios blare out; the fair is on again. I expect to wake each morning and find that it has been rolled up and taken on to the next town.

* * *

"Where can I park this car while I have some food?"

"If you drive another hundred yards you won't need to park your car. You'll find a drive-in."

"A what?"

"A drive-in. You know, sit in the car and have your food brought to you. Saves a lot of time."

"Saves who a lot of time: me or the waitress?"

"All depends how you look at it and what your aim in life is."

* * *

They make films in Hollywood when the sun shines but it is difficult to know which are the "sets" and which the hotels and restaurants. You get better food in the studios than you do in the restaurants and the studios look more like hotels than the restaurants look like restaurants. Everything looks like a set except a set. It is really very difficult.

* * *

"Let's go and see a film."

"What's on?"

"Janet Gaynor . . . Marlene Dietrich . . . the Marx Brothers . . ."

"Anything you say."

"Oh, I know a place: let's go to the drive-in."

"I've had enough food."

"No, no, the 'drive-in cinema.' "

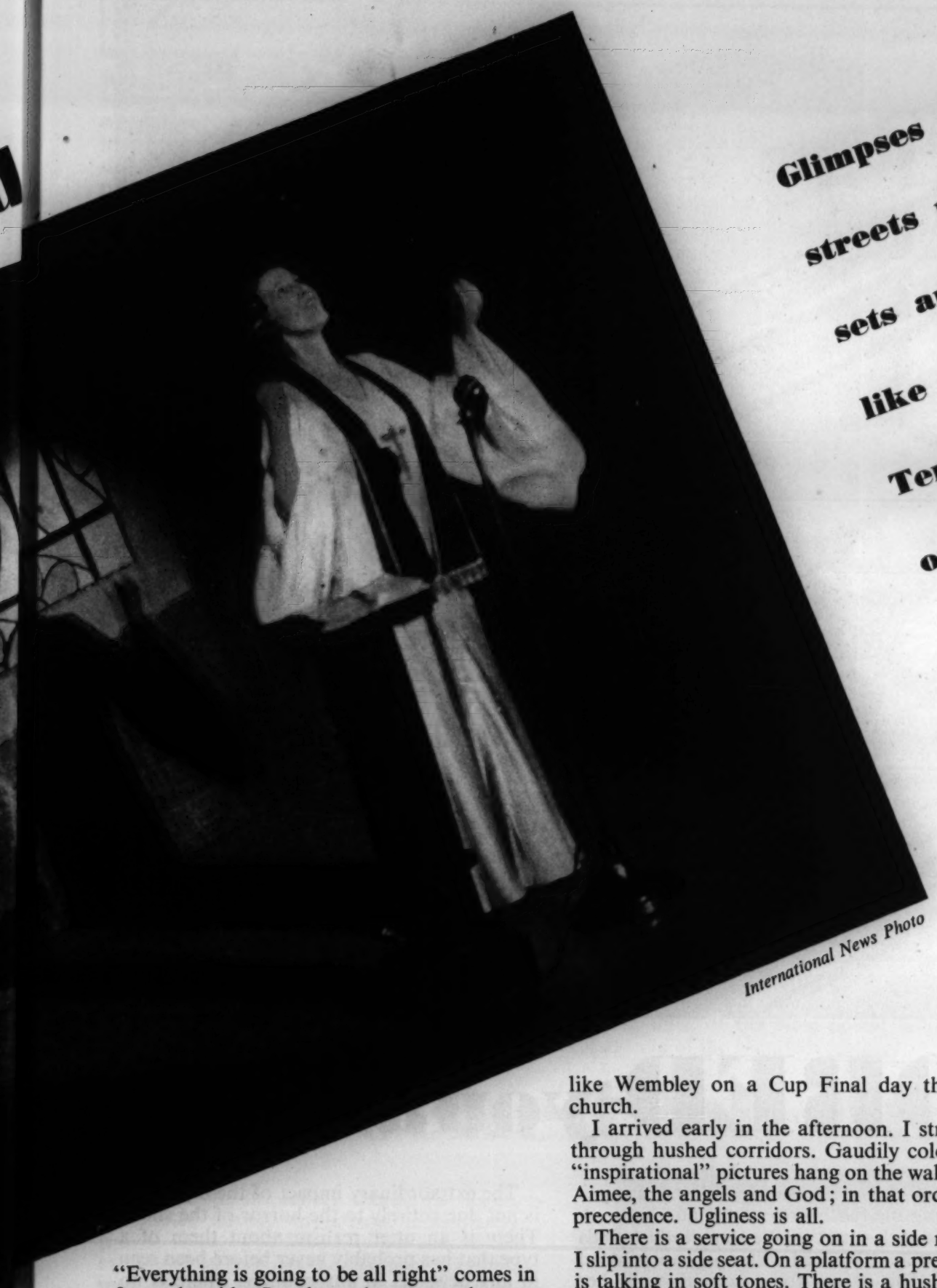
"What's on?"

"Don't know: but it's fun."

So I drive in for the second time.

This time it is to a huge parking place. It is quite dark and we are guided by a uniformed figure with a torch. There is an enormous screen hanging in the air. This is the drive-in cinema. The floor is slightly raked so that we can look out through the wind-screen in comparative comfort. The two in the back seat are not so comfortable. The figures on the screen are mouthing but I cannot hear a word. I open the side window of the car and

Glimpses of drive-ins, streets that look like sets and sets that look like streets, Aimee MacPherson's Temple, and the extras on the sidewalk



International News Photo

"Everything is going to be all right" comes in from the side. Loud speakers scarcely concealed in the aisles feed in the sound at right angles to the screen. Disembodied spirits fight desperately to regain their shadowy selves upon the screen. I give up before they do. I don't yet know what was on. But it's fun.

* * *

WHEN the tinselled temples of China and Egypt begin to pall there is still the Angelus Temple. It is one of the sights of Los Angeles and is always recommended on a wet afternoon. It is almost impossible to get in on a Sunday, for the devotees of Aimee Semple MacPherson line the streets hours before the service. Even with a first nighter's privilege of entry by a special early door it is still more like Wembley on a Cup Final day than a church.

I arrived early in the afternoon. I strolled through hushed corridors. Gaudily coloured "inspirational" pictures hang on the walls . . . Aimee, the angels and God; in that order of precedence. Ugliness is all.

There is a service going on in a side room. I slip into a side seat. On a platform a preacher is talking in soft tones. There is a hush over his audience. He drums his desk softly: "God is love, God is love." The audience murmurs: "Amen, Amen." He starts to pace the platform. His feet beat a tattoo. The sun is shining in a window. "God is love, God is love." "Amen, Amen." The preacher drums on his desk. I feel the drumming in my stomach.

I start when he shouts: "Hallelujah!" He dances across the platform. He says God is in his feet. The audience screech: "Hallelujah!" The tattoo of his feet quickens. The sun is shining brightly in at a window. A woman falls off her chair and rolls in the passage. A man bursts into tears. A woman stands rigid and speaks in a strange language. A man starts laughing hysterically. My stomach is throbbing. "God is love, God is love: Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen."

The preacher points at me and shouts: "Relax! Relax and God can do anything." He throws his arms in the air and heaves his waistcoat above the trouser line. He is wearing a belt and braces. This seems like a breach of faith. "Only relax and God can do anything." I try to laugh but the laugh sticks in my throat. The preacher is dancing fanatically now. The woman next me has fallen on the floor. She is convulsive and is sobbing: "Jesus, Jesus." My heart is thumping. I'm scared stiff. I run from the building in terror. Back to Hollywood, back to the fairground where hokum is hokum and is called by no other name.

* * *

A blazing sun beats fiercely down from a cloudless sky. The sidewalks sizzle. The blue hills quiver in the shimmery light. Palm trees wilt. It is noon on Hollywood Boulevard.

Tough looking guys . . . extras, I am told in a whisper . . . lounge against the shop fronts. I have seen their like in colder climes and would have been sure that they were the Unemployed. But here they are extras. Magnificent limousines slide down the roadway; on the sidewalk badly made up women with dull blonde hair perspire in red pyjamas. They are extras; some of them lead children by the hand.

I go into a drug store out of the heat. The man sitting on the next stool asks me for a match. I recognise a face I have seen in a thousand films. I do not know his name. I never did know his name. But in a way he was quite famous though nobody knew his name. There is a greasy stain just above his hat band; there are practically no heels on his shoes; he is an extra now. He pays a nickel for his drink and leaves no tip.

"UNCENSORED-you are going o

THOSE words, or others expressing the same idea, flashed on to Britain's newsreel screens last month, as the only warning before cinema audiences were plunged into a blood bath of the full horror of the Sino-Japanese war. Since the start of the present fighting, Paramount had been working up a crescendo of gruesome pictures, which often included long-shots of dead bodies. Few people could have imagined to what peak of visual horror all this was finally to lead.

Almost as if they had come to a private agreement beforehand, Paramount and Universal suddenly and simultaneously released the most amazing shots of what war means to the flesh it tortures, that the screen has ever shown.

Women and children flee from the bombardment of Shanghai's International Settlement. Great columns of smoke rise where death has fallen. Shambled streets—cars burning—the dust slowly blows away—revealing the full horror of the aftermath. A Chinese girl, smart in Western clothes, finds the pavement blocked with a jig-saw of dead bodies. She pauses for a second, pulls her skirts up above her knees—takes a series of high, long strides—hurries down the road. A man lies in the corner, his head propped against a doorstep—he waves languidly at the camera—from at least a dozen wounds the bright blood literally "pours" down his face, arms and body.

Rescue squads work with handkerchiefs tied round their mouths. They carry the wounded away on stretchers. They disentangle one body that has got all mixed up with an iron shutter. Then they turn their attention to the stinking human garbage. Great chunks of flesh are thrown into a huge open lorry. As it drives away, the cargo wobbles gently, like a dark streaked blancmange.

The extraordinary impact of these pictures is not due entirely to the horror of the shots. There is an utter realism about them of a type that has probably never before been seen in any newsreel in any country. There is no attempt to improve the sequences by smart cutting—no consecutive line of thought—just a wild looking hither-and-thither with the camera men, to whom fate had given the ghastly job of reporting what they saw.

There were three of them who were in range when the bombs fell. George Krainukov of Universal, who a few days before had had his camera shot out of his hand in the Chinese evacuation of Peiping, was within hailing distance. A Paramount man had arrived from the U.S. only a few hours before. There was also Harrison Forman of the *March of Time*.

For the men attached to the other reels, it was just a case of "hard luck." Movietone's

By GLEN NORRIS

Bonney Powell, was fully occupied elsewhere, arguing with the Japanese authorities, who were refusing to allow him complete freedom in his roaming. The Pathé News man missed the Clipper Plane with his material, the next plane did not leave for another week, and a week kills even a five-star newsreel story.

These facts explain why Paramount and Universal were alone in releasing the uncensored pictures; may explain also the ear-splitting howl that was immediately raised by rival editors.

Rushed to the press was a statement by Jeffrey Bernerd, top boss of Gaumont-British News:

"I disagree entirely with Mr. Cummins, Editor of Paramount News. It is the duty of the newsreels to present news, but not to put on the screen material for a political purpose.

"The exhibitors of this country run their theatres with the idea of entertaining the public.

"To show the ghastly destruction of human beings in the most horrific form is, I contend, letting down the exhibitor.

"I hold that fifty per cent of the exhibitors of this country—and that is putting it very mildly—would never show those films if they had seen them."

Thus was raised once again the old be-whiskered argument of Entertainment *v.* Realism. An argument that has served too long as an excuse for the unmitigated dullness of British newsreels.

Newsreel executives, exhibitors, and cinemaddicts who expressed complete agreement with Mr. Bernerd's arguments, failed to realise the close parallel between the present position of the newsreels and that of the Press about forty years ago. Then, too, critics were saying that the object of a newspaper was merely to entertain the "ladies and gentlemen of quality," that anything "unsavoury" would lead the Press towards its doom.

the public these terrors and horrors, so that people themselves can see that it's no drawing-room entertainment but stark realism in all its grimmest and most horrible truth.

"I've always contended the newsreels should do their job—and this is one of them—however dreadful it may appear on the screen.

"I think the newsreel companies are performing their proper duty in telling the truth of the terrors and horrors of the raid on Shanghai. I definitely think, it's time they acted up to their title—and showed actual news."

Sample letter published by *The Cinema:*

"Mr. Bernerd . . . implies that cinemas are run for entertainment only. But if the showing of such films can play the smallest part in averting the calamities of war, surely no argument can outweigh this consideration?

"According to Einstein, if only one man in every six liable to military service refused to fight, war would be impossible. Films showing all the terrifying realities of contemporary warfare, could do much towards making such a dream an actuality."

Meanwhile, *To-Day's Cinema* headlined: "Newsreels Give Anti-War Lead—The Real Facts—Courageous National Service—A Lesson for the Public." While in less noisy, but equally emphatic ways, hundreds of thousands of cinemaddicts showed their approval by flocking to see the pictures—by talking about them—by proving that a finely handled, bravely edited, newsreel story can jump right out of the "thrown-in-with-the-big-picture" class; can take its rightful place in a cinema programme.

And to Paramount's Cummins and Universal's Jeapes, go the well-merited congratulations of every serious cinemaddict in the country. For shining a spotlight of hope into a dark and dull corner of the film world: for releasing some of the most potent anti-war propaganda of the twentieth century.

"Human garbage . . ."

"Human flesh wedded to wood . . ."

"Street Cleaners, bandages round mouths . . ."

go be shocked but this is WAR!"

ONE point in Jeffrey Bernerd's letter, quoted above, was almost immediately proved wrong. Far from fifty per cent of the exhibitors cutting out the Shanghai pictures, most of them found such a rush of cinema-goers specially to see the newsreel, that by the second day of showing, the latter became almost the star feature of the programme. In the big cities, news theatres featured "The Shanghai Horror Film" and in general, the favourable effect on the box-office is likely to kill once and for all the argument that "the public won't stand for it anyway."

Meanwhile, from all quarters came defence of the far-sighted courage of Paramount's Editor G. T. Cummins and Universal's Cecil Jeapes. Sample editorial by Editor Ernest Fredman, of the *Daily Film Renter*:

"After I'd viewed them, I felt unhesitatingly these pictures ought to be shown. Personally, I think it time newsreels showed

One of the 500 bombed Refugees . . . Corner of Thibet and Edward VII Avenue

NELL GWYN to QUEEN VICTORIA

THE history of the reign can be a great nuisance to a director who has only two hours to tell the story of a great sovereign's life. Alexander Korda solved the problem neatly in *Henry VIII* by means of his main title, *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, which allowed him to leave the history out (though you will remember he brought in the foreign policy at the point where Henry said, "I must go and attend to France and Germany," leaving Ann to the attentions of Culpepper). Herbert Wilcox is not so happy in his title, so that the history of England becomes a sort of King Charles's head constantly butting into a pleasant account of a queen's love-life.

After the wedding, for instance, Miss Neagle and Mr. Walbrook go off in a railway train. This is the progress of science and engineering. Peelers and Bobbies are in attendance. This is the social progress of the age. While Mr. Walbrook makes her jealous with a little by-play, Miss Neagle discusses the Income Tax and the Penny Stamp. This is the development of Inland Revenue and Postal Services. A mob storms the palace gates. This is the working classes. Miss Neagle says, "Can such things be?" This is humanitarianism. By and by Miss Neagle reads a book by Mr. Dickens. This is literature.

But the biggest problem of all comes with the death of Miss Neagle's consort. That is the end of the love-life, and the reign is just beginning. To find that your film has died on you in the middle of the history must be a great blow. Mr. Wilcox finds the remedy ready to hand, in fact it has been his standby since the first reel. Subtitles.

A subtitle disposes of the long retirement (The Widow of Windsor), another gets rid of Imperial Expansion, and so on to the Diamond Jubilee. Between the opening subtitles (June 21st, 1837, Kensington Palace, Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Dover, etc.), and the concluding subtitles, lies the love-story, helped out by occasional captions, The Hungry Forties, Balmoral, Constitution Hill, St. Paul's, A long Period of Peace Followed, etc. The scenes are all static, with the exception of some horses at the beginning and some schoolboys in the middle. The later scenes are in brilliant red, blue and green. *Victoria the Great* thus becomes a kind of lantern-show.

This effect fits the period in a strangely fascinating way. The dullness of the film produces the same world-weariness as the old woodcuts of the Great Exhibition, family albums, pictures of the new gasworks 1877. The colour scenes are just like the old oleographs and coloured postcards.

The film is very bad indeed. As the young Queen, Anna Neagle is far too beautiful to maintain any illusion, yet the nature of the role gives her no scope for her sparkling vivacity. She is neither Victoria nor herself. As the film goes on and the make-up gets heavier and heavier, she becomes less and less Anna Neagle without getting any nearer to a likeness of the Queen. The final version is the one which, the press told us, called forth spontaneous applause from the crowd in the studio. A glance at any of the stills will show how bad it is, a horribly bloated face with

eyelids propped half shut, and paint-marks on the chin. Perhaps it was because it was so bad that the press said it was so good. She is photographed unmercifully, sometimes her maltreated face gleams with running grease. The crude make-up and harsh photography stultifies all her work. At the death of the Prince she has no chance at all, with a camera staring straight into her distorted face.

Anton Walbrook is luckier. He has the good fortune to die in his own likeness. He is quite a credible Albert, making a real and manly figure out of the somewhat shadowy Prince. The part suits him. But what a waste of Anna Neagle, who was Nell Gwyn, and Peg of Old Drury, and broke Leslie Banks's heart in *The Three Maxims*.

Well, Nell Gwyn was not married to Charles II, and Mr. Hays shut Miss Neagle's film out of America on that account. Mr. Wilcox has seen to it that this will not happen again. He has cast her as the prototype of wifely devotion and domestic virtue, and just to make quite sure, he has taken all the life and sparkle out of her, and spoiled her beautiful face with wax and gum and grease. The resulting effigy is about as capable of expression as a dummy from Madame Tussaud's, and a good deal less convincing. Will Hays should be pleased.

BUT the film will be a great success, particularly in America. The Americans will travel for miles and pay handsomely for pictures of England, Ireland and Scotland. They flocked to Korda's film to see Hampton Court Palace, the King's Banqueting Hall, the Hunting and Hawking. They flocked to *Tudor Rose*. They flocked to *Wings of the Morning* to see Killarney's lakes and fells, and to hear John McCormack sing to them. They will flock to *Victoria the Great* to see Buckingham Palace, Kensington Palace, Constitution Hill, Windsor Castle, and the reconstructions of Victoria's drawing room. If *Victoria the Great* had been about Christina of Sweden or Catherine of Russia or Marie Antoinette of France, it would have been laughed off Broadway for its production values. But it is about Victoria of England and it will go over big, and make a lot of money, and probably lay the foundations of the next crash by starting the next boom.

Judged by commercial standards, the film is a masterly production. It comes at the end of Coronation Year, when the bells have scarcely ceased to echo. It has Abbey scenes in which the Archbishop of Canterbury says "Look down upon this thy servant our Queen," with a great deal about "undoubted Queen of this realm," answered antiphonally with "God Save the Queen," just like the broadcast. Choirboys sing. Guns go off. Bands. The crowd outside the Palace sing the National Anthem. The band plays "God Save the Prince of Wales" when the baby comes. Herbert Wilcox has made a kind of coronation-cum-jubilee newsreel, built a love-story into it, stuck in the Repeal of the Corn Laws and a few other historical high-lights, and coloured the last reel. It is likely to be very popular in this country. It is sure to be a money-spinner in America.

YET it is a very bad film. But it will succeed. How is this? The success of a bad film is as great a puzzle as the failure of a good one. It seems there are some feelings and prejudices which are deeper than criticism. At a Prom Concert, the singer will give a couple of Brahms lieder, or a Schubert group, and the people will applaud till he comes back. He will then sing "The Trumpeter." The people will applaud till their hands are sore. Or it may be some sickly Irish or Scottish ballad. It is hard to believe that the same people are applauding. Perhaps it is not the same people, but other people clapping the same hands.

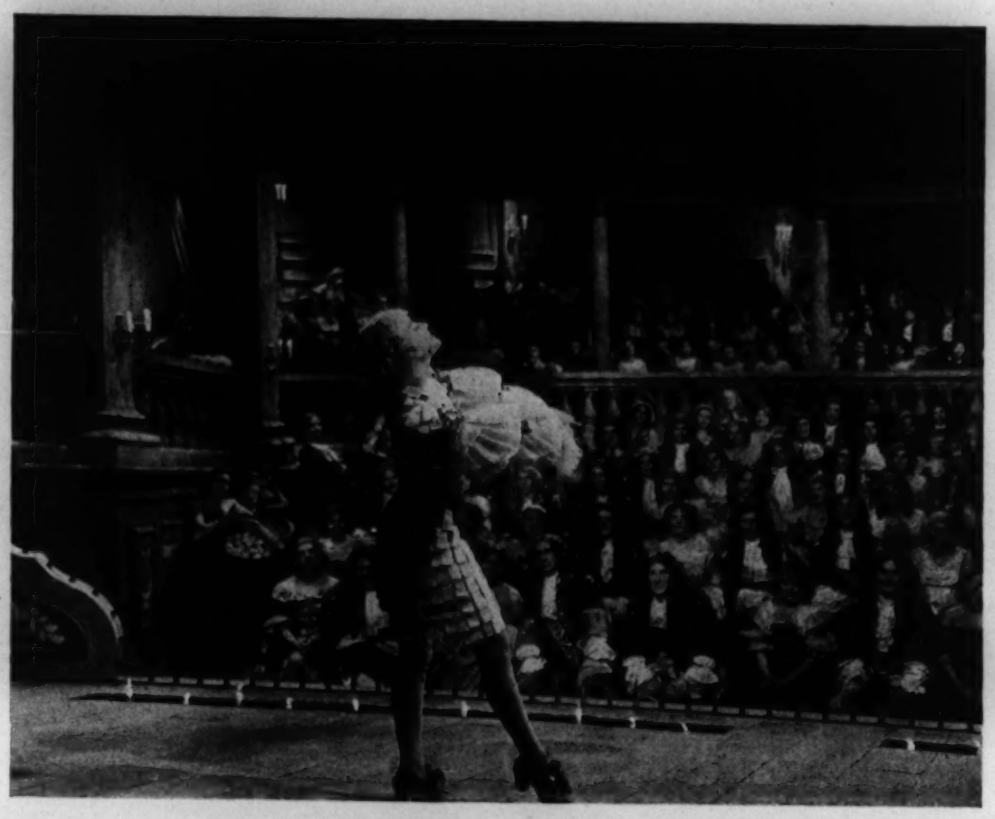
In the same way, no doubt, a connoisseur may sneer at a masterly etching which does not please his taste, and yet weep over a hideous oleograph of the place where he was born.

So if Mr. Wilcox wishes to pursue his success let him be sure of his ground. Let him put British films on the map with Yon Bonny Banks and Yon Bonny Braes, Ilkley Moor Baht 'at, We Don't want to Fight but by Jingo if we Do, She's my Ladylove, Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road, the Soldiers of the Queen, Land of Hope and Glory, Kathleen Mavourneen, and Blaydon Races.

That is our métier.

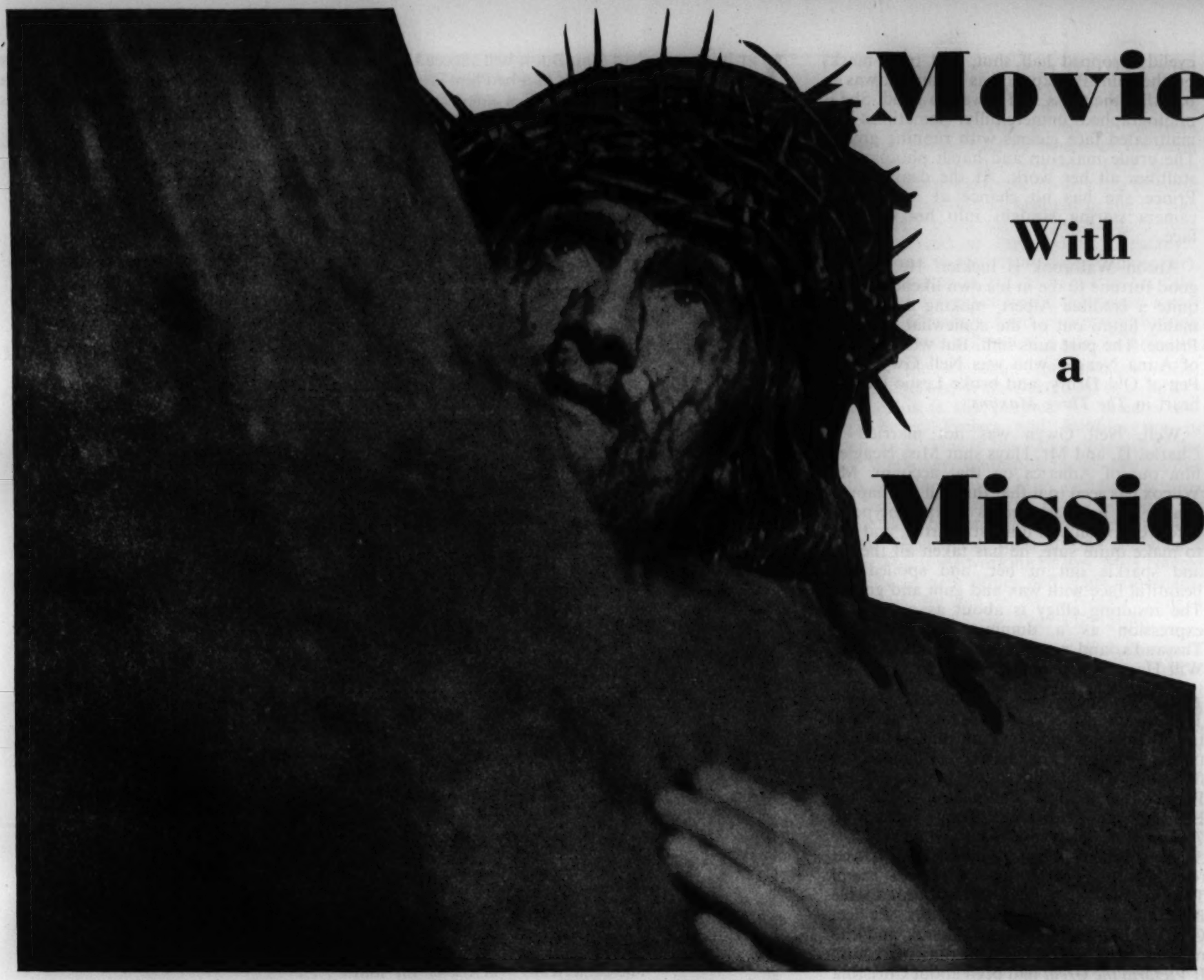
Russell Ferguson

"Shut out of America . . ."



"The Americans will travel for miles . . ."

Movies With a Mission



DEAR BRUCE WOOLFE,

It is rather delicate for a film director to advise on the subject of religious films. His practical knowledge of cinema audiences may hurt the sponsors, who, possibly, have a certain amount of idealistic feelings on the matter.

The few religious films I have seen were very poor. They had all the shortcomings of the amateur production—coarse acting, poor photography, no sense of "tempo," no knowledge of dramatic development.

I understand that in the new scheme the matter is going to be handled by professionals; and this alone is a guarantee of a definite improvement in its technical qualities.

But the real problem doesn't lie there. It is a problem of general style for the chosen subjects, a rather intricate and exceedingly interesting one, which the producer will have to solve.

It seems to me that the following two main points should be made clear before the start of practical work: firstly, the composition of the programmes, and secondly the amount of "preaching" expected from the films.

It is obvious that no audience, even a church audience, can cope with a succession of three or four two-reelers dealing exclusively with morals and goodness. The case is much the same as in the straight educational field. In schools the films do not take the teacher's place, and therefore in the churches they will not replace the pulpit.

A documentary, possibly with a religious interest, followed by the dramatic short such as Tolstoi's *Where Love is, God is*, and finally, a cartoon (or, why not a comedy?) would be the best composed programme for a religious film-show.

Now, referring to the amount of "preaching" contained in each film, I strongly suggest that in most cases comments from the organisers should supply the moral and religious teaching. This would lighten the burden of the film and improve its entertainment value.

I am perfectly aware, on the other hand, that very often a fair amount of exhibitionism is highly appreciated by religious audiences (such things as the amazing growth of the Oxford Group is the best possible example); but, I reckon that in your case you are not willing to encourage this taste. Therefore, too much loud praying on the screen, too many eyes lifted to the skies, should be avoided, as well as too much preaching. Public religious outbursts would require, in any case, great actors, and I believe that with your actual budgets you can't afford them.

The here-proposed straightforward exposition of a story on the screen would enable the film-images to appeal to the imagination of the audience in the simplest, liveliest style. This would give your shows the level of restraint and decency you are after, and, finally, would lead your whole scheme to succeed in a true religious way.

I hear that you might consider some modern "transcriptions" of biblical subjects.

I must confess that I can't imagine the Prodigal Son returning home on an old bike,

In a letter written to Bruce Woolfe, Alberto Cavalcanti discusses problems connected with the use of film for religious purposes.

Argues that subjects like the Reformation in England would be most effective religious subjects for realist film-makers.

nor a Joseph in tweeds giving Hitler a few cryptic and frightening warnings. . . .

On the other hand I think that an adaptation, say of Debussy's "L'Enfant Prodigue," could be quite an interesting experiment.

I also think that one or two of the very simple stories (mostly from the Old Testament) would make quite effective films if treated on a *real background*, and with very simple costumes, almost like oriental costumes worn to-day. (I personally have a great belief in Hagar's adventure as a film, if it was shot in a real desert.)

The annoying part is that it will be difficult to specialise script-writers, as you need variety and freshness; that means to say that you have to rely on ready-made transcriptions or on adaptations of certain themes by people who can express them.

You will certainly agree that in most cases a sort of "genius" is needed to build real drama round a moral concept, and we all know that without some kind of *drama* there will be no *film*.

I congratulate you on the choice of *Where Love is, God is*. I really enjoyed working on the treatment and I think it should prove the perfect type of religious subject. The Russian atmosphere will give the film an "extra something" and the action is so direct and good that it should present a minimum of difficulties in its film-making.

What Men Live By doesn't seem so easy to me. In the early part of the novel the character of Michail has a kind of sustained mystery round it; its main point is the disclosure towards the end that Michail is an Angel.

In the film, Michail's nakedness at the meeting by the Shrine, for instance, would have to be covered by some sort of white robes (which are too much like night-shirts). Again, his three smiles, even being emphasised by glowing light, would only lead later to cut-backs. These cut-backs are always difficult to avoid, because if the events were in the right chronological order most of the suspense would be lost.

Besides these pure constructional points, the fact that there is already one Russian story in your list should be a good argument against it. (I don't mention the point that Simon, like Martin of *Where Love is, God is*, is a shoemaker, because it could be easily altered: he might become a weaver or a miller.)

And even if the two main arguments above were not sufficient, there is a third one to be considered: it is the great difficulty, in the treatment of *What Men Live By*, caused by the mixture of natural and supernatural. Especially in a two-reeler, it is almost impossible to establish the two. This would lead, in our story, to a long monologue by Michail in which he tells Simon and his wife not only what he said to the Lord and what the Lord told him, but also the report to the Lord of his previous conversation with the mother, which then becomes a sort of third-hand affair.

I must confess too, that the lines towards the end of the novel:

> "The roof opened, and a column of fire rose from earth to heavens. Simon and his wife and children fell to the ground. Wings appeared upon the angel's shoulders and he rose into the heavens,"

definitely suggests to me a kind of Chaplinesque treatment for the end of the film. And you wouldn't allow such a jump from seriousness into burlesque, would you?

I think that some of Andersen's Tales, for instance, could, with a very slight twist in their morals, become quite suitable. I am thinking of the one called *The Mother's Tale* more than any other—the actual adventure could easily be transformed and fitted with a worthy conclusion.

As you know it is no use asking successful literary people to do any original scripting for such a scheme. They would be too expensive for one thing, and not sufficiently interested in short films. Our past experiences have well proved this.

Looking over existing books, too, one realises that very few modern writers have anything that would be of any use. Most of the exceptions, like André Gide, only wrote long novels (with costly copyrights, *e.g. La Port étroite* and *La Symphonie Pastorale*).

Maybe Selma Lagerloff, the Swedish lady-writer, has a few possible stories. I am certain that Zangwill has at least one very good one.

The Ufa, in its golden days, did a film about Luther. It was nothing much, lacking air and lacking guts. "History of the Reformation in England" could certainly be not only one of the best religious subjects but also one of the subjects that could be treated exceedingly well by your realist school.

There are plenty of interesting places, portraits and documents relating to the Reformation in England. Besides, these could be easily enlivened, by the showing of the churches and their congregations as they are to-day. The relations of the English leaders with the leaders of other countries would also make an interesting sequence. The start could be illustrated by life in Roman Catholic convents, which can be easily shot in France or Belgium.

Stills from "Golgotha," a religious film directed by Duvivier.

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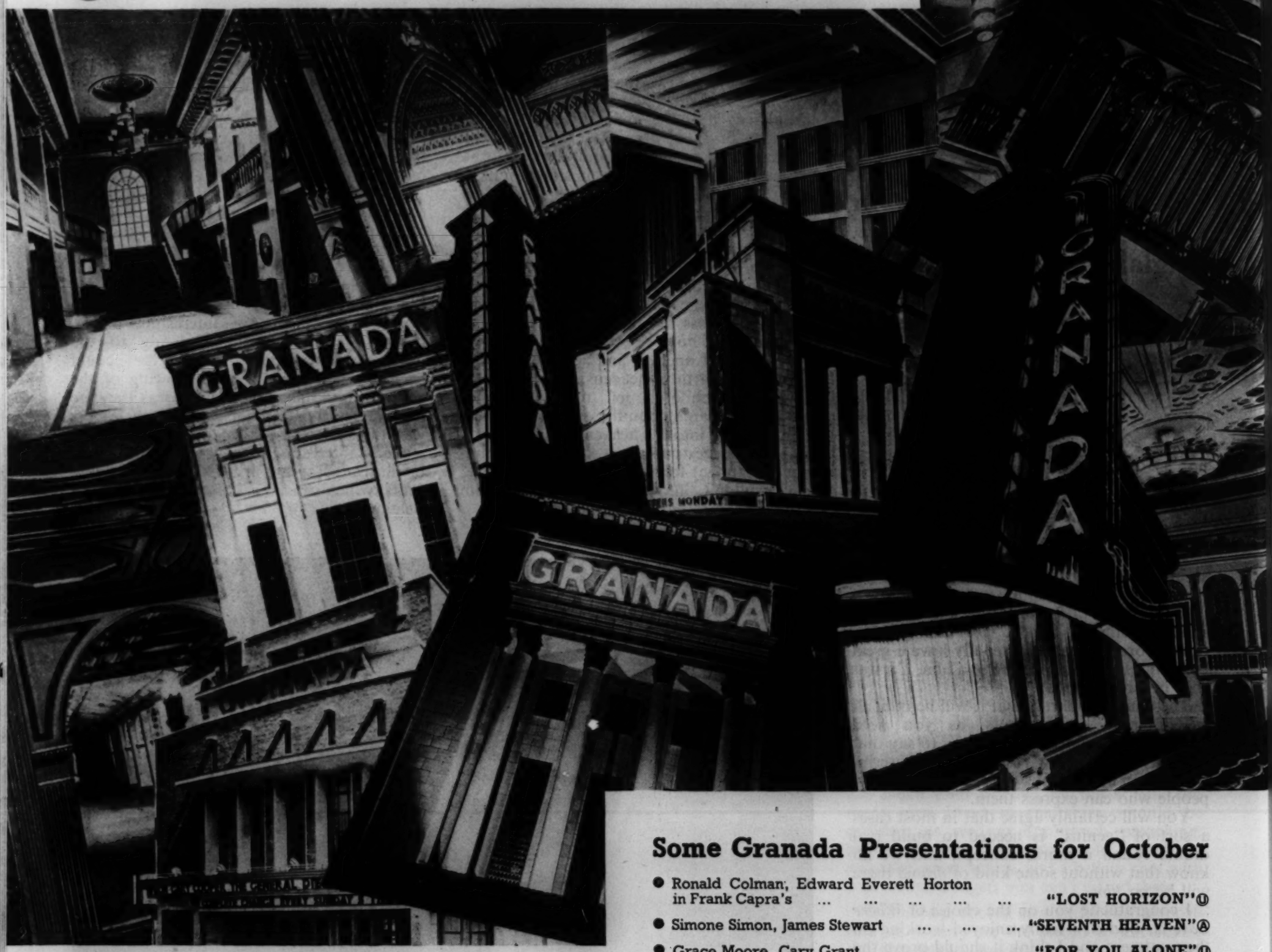

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HALF-AN-HOUR with PUDOVKIN

by

Basil Wright

WAFTED on an aroma of fried onions from the all-too-nearby canteen, and pursued by a crowd of anxious men and women seeking instructions and information, V. I. Pudovkin hurtles into a private office at the Mosfilm Studios (Moscow). His panting followers subside as he starts to talk, quickly and with enthusiasm, about films in general and his own in particular.

He is not tall, has bright eyes sunk deep in his head, and speaks very good English, though he has only spent a very short time in England. As he talks—and he is a good talker—the impression of vitality increases. I felt he had been wound up by Providence and was determined to tick on accurately and strike all the hours till the end of time; and it is certainly true that he has the most permanence of all the Russian directors. His solid appreciation of film possibilities has carried him right through from the early and glorious days of *Mother* and *The End of St. Petersburg* through the sound-revolution to a masterwork like *Deserter*. His mind is more than experimental; its abilities are settled and well under control.

Meantime he is talking. "Two years ago I started a new film called *The Happiest*. It was to be about the future of long distance flying in the sub-stratosphere. I wanted to foresee not merely the mechanical factors but also the new race of men that aviation is to breed. The film was shot to a scenario that edged far into a problematical future; and we finished cutting at the end of July this year."

At this point he became exceedingly excited, and almost emotional.

"Then," with a thump on an ash-strewn table, "then the Soviet flights across the North Pole to America suddenly happened. They exceeded the prophecies of my film. They turned my time-factors from future to present. I am now back in production"—(hopeful movement among the waiting crowd)—"re-shooting many of the sequences."

There was an electric pause, while he looked searchingly at me, as at an aborigine from a far country.

"I suppose you in England are really lucky," he said, more slowly. "Because the future doesn't come true while you are working—but our way is much more exciting"—he began to rev up again—"and we feel more genuine life in the work we are doing. The changes are all for the better and I shall finish in November, and do you know the most interesting thing about the cinema" (he has a habit of changing the subject in the middle of a sentence) "it is the relation between the director and the actor."

A feverish restlessness was now evident in the background, and he threw a reassuring signal over his shoulder.

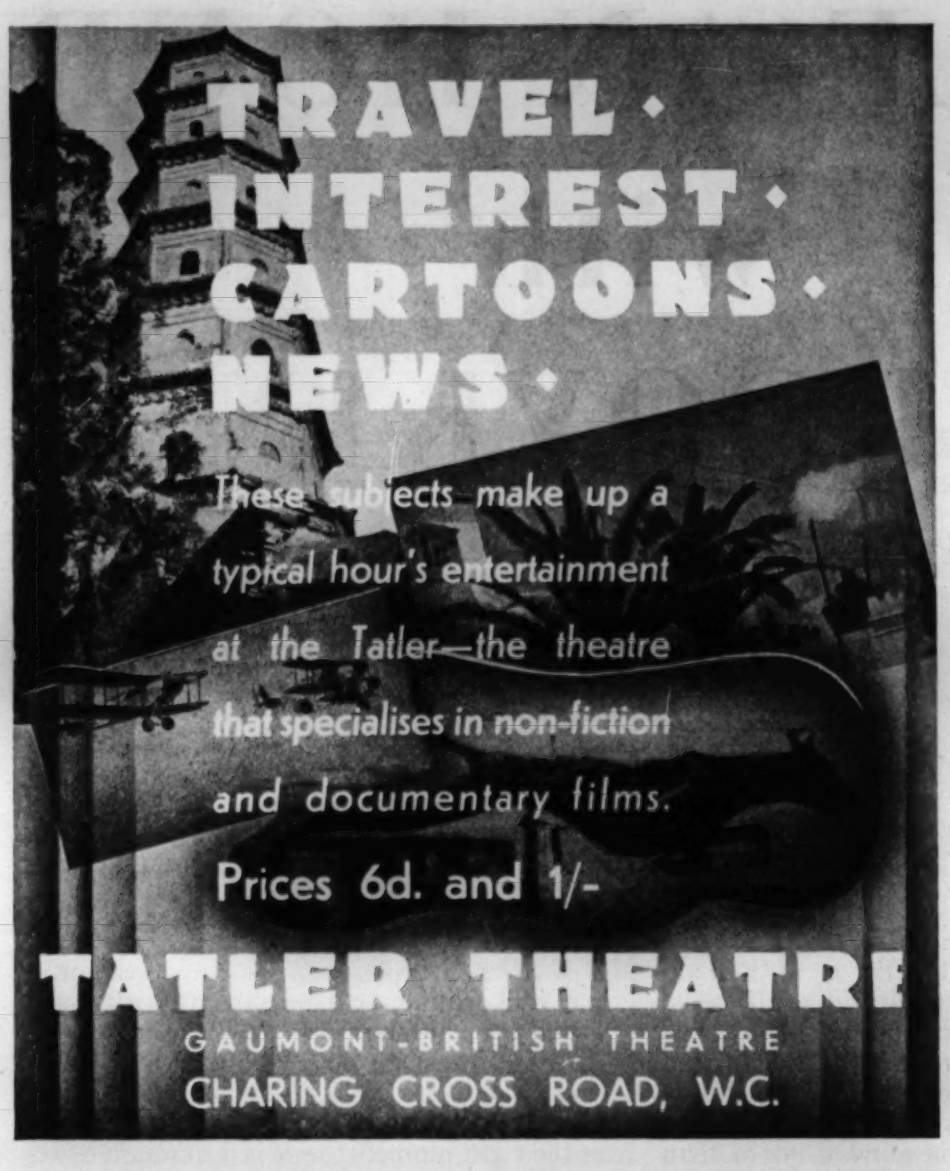
"But I must go now," he continued, settling back in his chair, "and the whole point about the actor is to use the emotional values at the right moment; so it is a question of research and rehearsal. But you cannot obtain results by endless rehearsal in the studio. I am not one who depends so much on the technical resources. I will arrange sets, lights and cameras with endless care; I will calculate the movements and go over them for hours with the actors, BUT" (very excited and talking fast) "the object when you take your shot is to achieve the maximum from your actor, and you cannot do it if you or he are thinking about the machinery. You must block yourself off from the mechanical apparatus around you. That is a great moment—when only the director and the actor exist—the two of them combining to present the maximum of truth, the maximum of drama, the maximum of emotion and reality."

HE quietened down a bit and began to gather up his papers.

"So you see the director must take the actor away and get to know him and discuss every sentence with him, and most of the rehearsals will not be in the restless atmosphere of the studio," he got up, and the rabble surged round him. "The rehearsals will be intimate; everything will be calculated, everything foreseen, against the only moment which counts, which is when the camera starts turning. . . ."

By this time he was at the door, and I put in a hasty word—"With the future coming true all round you, Comrade Pudovkin, what subject shall you choose for your next film?"

"*Anna Karenina*," he said over his shoulder, with a delicate smile, and vanished into the onion-laden corridors.



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CAGNEY —KING of the CORNER BOYS

"Taxi"

THE recent Bernstein Ballot places James Cagney number seventeen on the list of "liked male stars," and top of the "disliked male stars." This apparent contradiction is easily explained: he owes his comparatively high position among the "liked male stars" to a vote seventy per cent masculine; but his capturing of the unpopularity championship for the second time is due to an overwhelming adverse feminine vote, a vote which also places Robert Taylor as "screen favourite number one," so it needn't be taken too seriously.

This sociological cyclone wields his greatest influence over the young men and boys of the working-class districts—the corner-boy, factory-hand, errand-boy and messenger type. Among them, his gait, dress, staccato sentences, his contempt for women, his punches and slaps, evoke some deep response which finds an outlet in conscious or unconscious imitation. Cagney is essentially the player of these types, but in American settings which add an unusual significance. It is as the personification of the tenement, back-street born, American workman, that Cagney has achieved an unusual importance and world fame.

It is largely due to his portrayals that this phenomenon, the American working man, is known here. All the features of the American urban type are to be seen in Cagney: the independence of thought, the contempt for high-hats, the ready suspicion of the next man allied to an instinctive generosity, a tough exterior allied to sentimentality, the voicing of an outwardly false sense of values allied to a fundamental rightness of angle; all the forcefulness, energy and fatalism which seems so much a part of the American workman. Which may help to explain the startling pictures we have seen during the last year of thousand-dollar-a-week stars in the picket line, with Cagney prominent. Of Cagney, with typical vigour, addressing a meeting of studio workers; or the printed rumours of Cagney's donations to funds in aid of the Spanish Government, and his allegiance to American communism. These may be rumours, exaggerations, bits of straw blown in the winds that sweep America—but they are just as likely to be true, because there is no mistaking the social implications of the Cagney role. The upheaval in America, which has brought trades unionism of a militant type to heavy industry in the States, shoved dynamic showman John Lewis to the front of world labour news and brought a vast sweeping change in the whole tone and appearance of American-born labour, cannot fail to evoke a response in the Brooklyn-born dynamo of the screen.

Hollywood is now making great films of the slums and the social problems arising from slum conditions. *Dead End* and *Winterset* are examples of this—but Cagney did it with less licence and less material. It was implicit in nearly every role he played.

Implicit throughout, whether in the tough-boy, gangster, role for which he was marked out, following the success of *Public Enemy*, or the more directly social-conscious *Taxi* and *Mayor of Hell;* or in the later, *Frisco Kid.*

"His body," Foster Clark has written, "is a transparent instrument for the demonstration of every facet of the lives of millions of men into whose class he was born. . . . He is not only a rough-neck from a down-town filling-station, nor a worn-out racing-driver, nor a cocky truckman, nor a damn-good prize-fighter, nor a petty-gangster, nor a travelling salesman, nor a picture-snatcher, but all of these varied characters, each perfectly realised in itself, with the inimitable addition of his own brand (since he was born with it) of recklessness, bitterness, anguished comedy and sober hysterical gaiety. Cagney is the perfect portrait of the American urban man and boy, whose life is so insecure and dangerous that the only buckler they can forge for themselves up to the present has been in the anarchic, ruthless, funny and tender violence which is apparent (as their reflection) in his every gesture; his walk, his nervous fists, his abrupt silences and his steady mounting rage."

BASICALLY, Cagney is one of the most significant of modern film actors. He is equalled and in many ways surpassed by Muni, with this difference—Muni's gangsters and underworld kings are foreign-born products of the slums, lit by Muni's characteristic intelligence and genius; whereas Cagney's are American, clear-cut American, and mirror the reactions and responses, advances and set-backs of the American worker. He acts with face and voice, but he acts even more with feet and hands and gait—nervous, quick, over-loud, to cover lack of confidence, feet that pitter-patter their rage, or happy, loud, joyous triumphs, hands that clap with sudden exaltation or itch to punch the face in front.

Cagney has made his stand for better and more suitable stories; he is the suited vehicle to translate for the screen, the ferment and the changes sweeping over the American workmen of to-day. And it is to be hoped that he will get the stories his integrity and sincerity of character and performance demand.

Richard Carr

Taxi—Warner Bros.

"Hands that itch to punch . . ."

PEOPLE OF THE STUDIOS

● Great Britain

Denham

The unexpected success of *Victoria the Great* in New York has resulted in Herbert Wilcox receiving a production contract with Radio and an appointment as chief of Radio's British production activities. Deal is for four or five subjects annually, costing up to £150,000 each. "I now feel more national-minded than ever," said Wilcox. "The true international value of our films lies in their being essentially British in subject and setting. If I had my way I would never make another picture in black and white."

* * * *

A Yank at Oxford, first subject of M.G.M.-British, started production on September 1st with Robert Taylor, Lionel Barrymore, and Maureen O'Sullivan. Jack Conway, responsible for *Viva Villa*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Libelled Lady*, directs; Michael Balcon produces. Camera work is by Hal Rosson, last at Denham for *The Ghost Goes West*. Supervising editress is Margaret Booth, who for some years held a similar position with Irving Thalberg. Second M.G.M.-British picture will be *Shadow of the Wing*, drama of the R.A.F., with Clark Gable and James Stewart. The Air Ministry is giving full facilities.

Metro is negotiating to lease the Palace Theatre in Cambridge Circus for ten years. Understood that C. B. Cochran, one of the theatre's directors, instigated the deal some weeks ago. Idea is to have another West End house for super-pictures on a long run basis, instead of continuous as at the Empire. The theatre would also be used to test out shows for possible filming.

* * * *

Shooting starts October 1st on Gracie Fields' first for Twentieth Century-Fox, *He Was Her Man*. Victor McLaglen has the other top spot in this picture, story of which has a goldrush background. Script is by Sam Hellman, direction by Monty Banks. Cost is expected to top £200,000.

* * * *

Elizabeth Allan has quit the cast of *The Rat*, current Chatterton-Walbrook picture, following a dispute over star billing. Rene Ray gets the part. . . . Props and costumes from Korda's unfinished *I, Claudius* have been loaned to Sydney Carroll for his open air production of *Julius Caesar* at Regent's Park. London Films still lists the picture for autumn production. . . . Dr. A. J. Cronin's novel *The Citadel*, which ran into three editions the first week of publication, has been bought for filming by Victor Saville. . . . Annabella's proposed film, *Let's Go to Paris*, has been temporarily shelved, and her *Follow the Sun* has been re-christened *Dinner at the Ritz*. . . .

* * * *

Leslie Howard has been signed for the lead in Korda's *Lawrence of Arabia*, which has been shelved since spring. William K. Howard, who directs, will take a unit to Egypt for exteriors. On completion of the picture he remains in England to direct Laughton in *White Gold* for Mayflower Films.

Highbury

The Romance of Dancing, made at the Highbury studios, is the first commercial exploitation of the Multiscene system. By use of Multiscene the illusion of spectacular sets and a limitless number of dancers can be given with only a few feet of floor space and a handful of players. Origin of the process was the necessity to provide a spectacular title background for the Winad's trailer to *The Great Ziegfeld*. Inventor was Mr. Herbert Parsons.

The Romance of Dancing is primarily a spectacular musical dancing production, to be released as a series of six two-reelers by M.G.M. In no case have more than ten artists been used, and none of the thirty scenes exceeds 20 feet in width or height. Actual floor space utilised was 20 by 30 feet.

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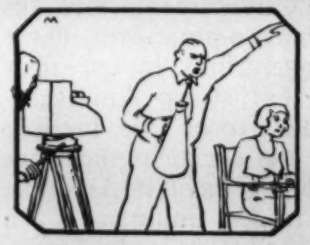
Current production here is *Sam Small Leaves Town*, with Stanley Holloway and June Clyde. Alf Goulding, who made several Harold Lloyd silent films, and *The Gang Show* with Ralph Reader, is directing.

Pinewood

From September 30th to October 5th televiewers will see films in the making . . . probably an unwise step as far as film-makers are concerned. A mobile television unit will be stationed at the studios and transmission from the stages will be given on three nights. Programme will include Sonnie Hale directing *Sailing Along* with Jessie Matthews, Jack Whiting, Roland Young, and Barry McKay; René Clair directing the new Buchanan picture with Maurice Chevalier; and a glimpse at a British Paramount film in production. In the afternoon the camera will visit the power house, plasterer's shop, boardroom (rebuilt from the saloon of the *Mauretania*), garden estate, cutting rooms, workshops, and the model room, where it is hoped to stage a train smash. Tour will include the dressing rooms, with Nova Pilbeam, Will Hay, Lili Palmer and Desmond Tester acting as guides.



* * * *

First of Hitchcock's next two directorial jobs for G. B. will be another Nova Pilbeam picture, adapted from a French short story by Marcel Achard. Hitch, John Harrison, his assistant, and Mrs. Hitchcock (Alma Reville), are working on the script, and production starts in November. Cast so far unsettled.

Hitchcock has made no decision regarding plans after the expiry of his present contract, although M.G.M. and other U.S. companies have been hankering after him. He figures ultimately to become a producer . . . says the director's importance in pictures is waning and that the writing and production ends are gradually taking on increased importance.

● America

Grand National

A nineteen-year ambition on the part of Victor Schertzinger to shoot a film in continuity is being fulfilled with *Something to Sing About*. Film is being shot in sequence from beginning to end—an unusual procedure in the film world. James Cagney, star of the picture, is also fulfilling an old ambition . . . during the ten years since he left the song-and-dance business for tough-guy parts in Hollywood, he has kept up his dance practice daily, in the hope that some day he might make a musical. Fred Astaire has been showing him a step or two.

Leslie Howard is playing a part in the comeback career of Anna Sten. Howard and Dr. Frenke, Miss Sten's husband, have formed Frenke Productions, backed in part by Californian oil money, and will make three films starring Miss Sten for Grand National release, and three for release through other companies. Howard will probably star in one.

Paramount

Beau Geste, which Paramount has had on the cards for more than a year, gets a positive date on the studio's production schedule for November. It will be one of Lucien Hubbards' four pictures for the year to be made in Technicolor. Script is by W. P. Lipscomb.

Harold Lloyd, fighting hard to keep his place among front-rank comedians, is securing Jean Arthur for his next picture, *Professor Beware*. Time was when any star of Lloyd's stature was strong enough to carry a picture to box-office success with supporting rôles assigned to little- or lesser-known players. The need for double-star billing comes with the arrival of more sophisticated comedy.

Marlene Dietrich's *Angel* will soon be over here . . . title doesn't suggest a sophisticated melodrama and romance, but the association of producer-director Ernst Lubitsch with Dietrich, Herbert Marshall, and Melvyn Douglas emphatically does. Samson Raphaelson, contributing writer to *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney*, *The Gay Deception*, *Accent on Youth*, *The Merry Widow*, and *Trouble in Paradise*, wrote the script from the continental stage play. Supporting cast includes Edward Everett Horton, with Lubitsch in *Design for Living* and *Merry Widow*, and Ernest Cossart, with the director and Miss Dietrich in *Desire*. Frederick Hollander, who composed the theme song, wrote solo numbers for *Desire* and *Awake and Dream*. Cameraman Charles Lang was photographer for *Desire*.

Rebecca West has been signed to write an original story for Claudette Colbert. . . . Cecil B. De Mille shooting *The Buccaneer* with Fredric March, Franciska Gaal and Walter Brennan. . . . Edward Arnold making his singing debut in B. P. Schulberg's *Blossoms on Broadway*. . . . Frances Dee and Bob Burns added to the cast of Frank Lloyd's *Wells Fargo*, featuring Joel McCrea. . . . Mae West making *Everyday's a Holiday*, with Edmund Lowe. Edward Sutherland directing.

Warner Bros.

Warners launched two big films last month. First to get away was *Gold is Where You Find It*, with Michael Curtiz directing. Week later *The Adventures of Robin Hood* was begun under William Keighley.

Looks as though Warners might miss the boat by filming only an incident in the career of David Garrick, famous Shakespearean actor and idol of eighteenth-century Drury Lane. Incident takes place round about 1750, and the comedy aspect is exploited. Based on a screenplay by Ernest Vadja, contributor to *Personal Property* and *A Woman Rebels*, the film is directed by James Whale (most recent assignments: *Showboat* and *The Road Back*). Brian Aherne and Olivia de Havilland are in the top spots.

Knights of the Klu Klux Klan have filed a suit for £2,700 against Warner Bros. for alleged use of their patented insignia in *The Black Legion*. The suit complains that two of the principal characters wore the Klan's white cross, superimposed on a background of red with a black square. The Klu Kluxers also charge that the film's dialogue contained the reference "Are we in for another reign of terror by a new Klu Klux Klan?"

A series of educational shorts is being made for Yale University to assist students of the medical college and other groups.

Executives are negotiating with Miriam Hopkins to do *Jezebel*, Bible story, on her one picture commitment. The film was originally scheduled for Bette Davis, but latter goes into *Hollywood Hotel* instead.

Report in last month's *W.F.N.* of Paul Muni's proposed two-years' retirement is followed by rumours of his decision to play Attila the Hun, fifth-century Barbarian chieftain whose vast domain extended from China to the Atlantic. Rumours, also, that Laemmle wants him for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

M.G.M.

So successful has been Hollywood's campaign against the gangster that M.G.M. is able to announce *The Last Gangster*. Big money offered by Metro for the loan of Roy Del Ruth to direct this Edward G. Robinson-Luise Rainer starrer was rejected by Twentieth Century-Fox. Del Ruth recently completed *Broadway Melody* for M.G.M., and now returns to the Fox fold for the next Sonja Henie picture, *Bread, Butter, and Rhythm*.

David Miller, shorts director, is in Europe making one-reelers of big continental personalities. He hopes to persuade the three big dictators to allow a camera to follow them through the day's work. It is expected that the Duke and Duchess of Windsor will also be approached.

Doubts have lately arisen over both the desirability and availability of Charles Laughton for the role of Louis XVI in Norma Shearer's *Marie Antoinette*, and it is possible that Robert Taylor will play the French king. Peter Lorre and Charles Boyer have also been considered. Laughton had an agreement with Irving Thalberg for another picture to follow *Mutiny on the Bounty*, but recently declared he would consider the *Antoinette* part only if Miss Shearer came to England for the film. The American system of taxation is reputedly the trouble.

The Firefly, Rudolf Friml musical with Jeannette MacDonald and Allan Jones, is in the new Metrocolour effect . . . film is toned through a chemical formula employing platinum and other salts, giving the picture a bronzed effect. John M. Nickolaus discovered the process.

Garbo's *Conquest* (formerly *Madame Walewska*) put back into production for several days of retakes and added scenes . . . Myrna Loy handed the lead in *Test Pilot*. Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy also set, with Victor Fleming directing. . . . James M. Cain, author of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, literary sensation of three years back, discovered on the Metro staff. . . . Carl Laemmle, jun., patting himself on the back for the resale of *The Amazing Doctor Clitterhouse* to Warners at $30,000 profit.

United Artists

Samuel Goldwyn has built a replica of a two-hundred yards section of the Great Wall in China for *The Adventures of Marco Polo*, Gary Cooper's current picture. Budget for settings alone amounts to £100,000, or just one-third of total production costs. Great Wall section cost £12,000. One thousand extras were used for location shooting at Malibu Lake, causing a shortage of extras elsewhere and a hold-up on several Western pictures.

A committee from the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was invited to witness battle-scene rushes involving 250 horses. The visit was to forestall possible rumours of cruelty during the fighting episodes.

Binnie Barnes and Sigrid Gurie (Goldwyn's "hush-hush" Norwegian discovery) have feminine leads in the film.

Personalities from all branches of the entertainment world contribute to *The Goldwyn Follies*. Helen Jepson and Charles Kullman, Metropolitan stars, represent grand opera; ballet has Norwegian dancer Vera Zorina, and George Balanchine; Bobby Clark comes from the musical-comedy stage, and radio and night clubs have a delegation headed by Virginia Verrill and ventriloquist Edgar Bergen. Music is by the late George Gershwin and his brother Ira. Screen representatives are Adolphe Menjou and the Ritz Brothers.

After six days shooting on *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, David Selznick called a halt . . . decided the film lacked colour and put it back into production before the Technicolour cameras with a new director, Norman Taurog. Change will double the cost of the film. Principal rôles are filled by Tommy Kelly, Walter Brennan, Jackie Moran, Beulah Bondi, Victor Jory, and Cora Sue Collins. Jimmy Wong Howe is at the camera.

Walter Wanger has announced a £400,000 production dealing with the history of California, in which his six contract stars, Madeleine Carroll, Charles Boyer, Sylvia Sidney, Joan Bennett, and Henry Fonda are all to take part. Planned to follow in the epic tradition of *The Covered Wagon*, it will trace the development of the state from the earliest days. Screenplay is by Grover Jones, who scripted *Lives of a Bengal Lancer*.

● France

Jean-Michel Renaitour, president of the Cinema Parliamentary Group, recently drafted a bill hitting here-today-and-gone-tomorrow producers and their tight-fisted methods. French movie industry is joining in this united movement to place the business on a more profitable and ethical basis.

Renatoir's bill provides:

1. Clean-up of the French market by obliging all producers to deposit in banks half of the sum of proposed production costs.
2. Guaranteed control of state taxes by confining percentage charges to box-office receipts.
3. Reform of censorship so that high production costs may not be sunk in a production later banned by the censors.
4. Exportation visas to be demanded in order to protect the French films abroad.
5. Reform of agencies for actors and extras, who now, it is claimed, often hand out from 40 to 50 per cent of their salaries in commission.

* * * *

As soon as Warner Bros.' *Tovarich* comes off the floor in Hollywood, Charles Boyer is due back in his native country to make *Le Venin* for André Daven. Stage play by Henry Bernstein is being adapted for the screen by Marcel Achard, and Marc Allegret is set as director. Pat Paterson (Boyer's wife) plays feminine lead.

Boyer is booked to make English and French versions of *Mylord l'Arsouille* in Paris next year.

● Germany

France and Germany at war again . . . this time over a German film. Few weeks ago a resolution was passed at the International Film Congress that no country should make films harmful to the prestige of another country. In the middle of the convention a new film, *Mon Fils, Monsieur le Ministre*, opened in Berlin which correspondents of French dailies reported strongly anti-French. To complicate the situation, French actress Mme Françoise Rosay plays the lead, and picture is based on Henri Birabeau's "Fiston," a satire on the French Government.

French claim the film attacks democracy in general, and France in particular. First part the Germans admit, but state that there is nothing which might be interpreted as an attack on France. Film is simply a farce on the democratic form of government before 1933.

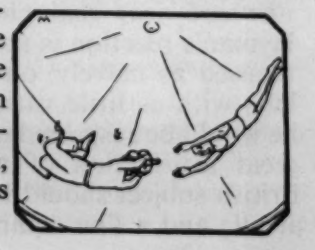
* * * *

"In this country we do not read books. We swim, we wrestle, we fence, we lift weights, but we do not allow our muscles to be softened by intellectualism."

The above passage, uttered by a police chief, was responsible for the banning of the Tobis picture, *The Land We Love*. The non-Aryan director of the film, it is understood, has since fled to America and accepted another engagement.

* * * *

Jaques Feyder, director of *La Kermesse Héroïque* and *Knight Without Armour*, has started production of *People on Wheels*, under the auspices of K. J. Fritzsche Productions of the Tobis-Magna. Françoise Rosay, Camilla Horn and Irene von Meyendorff star in the film, story of which centres round circus life.



SIX FILMS

by John Grierson

Fredric March "A Star is Born"

I AM going to follow Mr. Swaffer in my estimate of recent films. Swaffer talks of passing from the wooden-headed atmosphere of *Broadway Melody* to the electric excitement of the Farr-Louis fight; and this was the sequence in which I saw the films myself. I too am for the Farrs against the Taylors any day. There is about Farr a sense of getting to work about something which the other, so obviously nice young man, lacks. The electric thing about the Farr-Louis fight is, of course, that one is seeing it.

Like other maniacs I stayed up for the broadcast. The commentary by Bob Bowman was, in its way, a good job of work. It conveyed the atmosphere; it told a story which, in its own terms, was exciting; and it had, as radio always has, the infinite advantage of immediacy. Yet it was a thoroughly bad documentary. There was too much atmosphere and too little observation; it lacked expertise. I do not pretend to know much about fights, but here was a fight story in which the principal and almost only emphasis was the surprise at seeing Farr put up a stand at all. The estimate of the business in hand was never for any space objective or concrete. And that, of course, is the worst of radio and immediacy. Its spontaneities may be fresh but they tend to be superficial; and what a relief to the intelligent mind to come back to movie and find the real material for a judgment. Even a week after.

The film was giving that extra something which the other had not got. Call it authenticity. I suppose expert opinion of the fight must be that Farr did well but not nearly well enough and that the show was nowhere near championship class. My own layman's reaction is that if any film producer focused as naïvely on the head and traded lefts with as little variety for fifteen rounds, he would be suspected of a lack of genius. The great satisfaction of the event was that a British subject should be fighting in this class at all; and a fine comment it is on our self-respect that we should find it bewildering. The only word to say is that one brave young Welshman has at last taken it for granted that Americans can be—at times—ninety per cent hooey; and I hope the lesson is not lost on our native film producers. They too have a tendency to accept demurely their American classification as "horizontal hams."

As for *Broadway Melody*, I cannot pretend to have seen it all. It took an hour by the clock for the various heroes and heroines to be rounded up from the race tracks, horse boxes, Fifth Avenue flats and theatrical boarding houses. There was no doubt they were up to something once the process of getting together had been got over. My own guess—probably as good as any—was that it would finish in a musical comedy show, with the racehorse winning just enough to see the production expenses through. But I felt that an hour by the clock was rank inefficiency and that some sort of active protest was called for. I left. Regarding Eleanor Powell, I note a recent description of Gordon Craig's: "One of these American ladies who does something astonishingly well, putting into her work an energy and a thoroughness which, if energy and thoroughness could do great things, would do so in this case. . . . Unless great talent—or of course genius—accompanies energy and thoroughness nothing is come of nothing." It is not about Miss Powell but it will serve. She has as many footnotes as a sociological treatise out of Chicago University—and I rate her exactly there.

BETTER, I found, was *Wake Up and Live*, and I am surprised more has not been made of it. This too is a musical, and a lively one, with the characters all on and no nonsense. None of your lumbering locomotives on Wrotham Hill taking Ziggs Giant Circus from Charing to Farningham, which is Hollywood's more recent conception of a musical special. This thing moves along and, based as it is on a radio rivalry between two actual people—Walter Winchell, New York's Mr. Hickey, only less urbane, and Ben Bernie, the band leader—it carries an interesting flash of actuality. The skit on America's passion for disciplined attendants will gladden the heart of everyone who has enjoyed the uniformed monkey tricks of a Publix or Roxy theatre—or listened to our own P.C.T. telephone slogan, "Blank theatre, at your service." It is nice to see these unctions being ridden down.

THE response of my immediate neighbours to *A Star is Born* may be worth recording. Len Lye describes its colour as "technically a terrific job," and on these matters Lye is, of course, an authority. He has thought more about colour possibilities, and certainly realised more of them, than anyone in the country.

Farr-Louis Fight
A Universal Newsreel.

Broadway Melody of 1938
A M.G.M. film, directed by Roy Del Ruth, with Robert Taylor and Eleanor Powell.

Wake Up and Live
A 20th Century-Fox film, directed by Sidney Lanfield, with Walter Winchell and Ben Bernie.

A Star is Born
A United Artists film, directed by William A. Wellman, with Janet Gaynor, Fredric March, Adolphe Menjou and Lionel Stander.

From other than a laboratory point of view—and all honour to the Technicolor people for their progress—I find the colour of *A Star is Born* no great shakes in excitement. Lye's own recent work in *Trade Tattoo* is a generation ahead when it comes to mobilising colour to the point of sensation. In the Hollywood article, it is still, for the most part, a mere decorative addition to the story.

Yet it is worth a critic's while to examine this film very closely, and distinguish those points where colour steps in to help up the description. The simple fact emerges, for example, that black has curious dramatic powers in a colour film. There are moments in *A Star is Born* which stay in the head—the shadow of a train falling across a woman's face; the eyes of a girl when she is kissed in the dark; the eyes of a man watching in the dark. These moments are all of a kind, and very simple, but they seem to indicate that in colour we may achieve a new and useful sense of intimacy. On the other hand, overlighting has been a deplorable convention in film studios, and few directors have tried to find what black and white might do in the same direction. The ironic situation has, perhaps, arisen, that it has taken colour to discover for us the powers of black and white. After all, the most intimate dramatic appearance of eyes that ever occurred in a film was in "*M*."

In the abstractions of its musical comedy values, the almost classical conventions of its hokum, Hollywood is, as ever, a thousand times surer of its ground; and these fine little aids to intimate and dramatic statement which colour is bringing, are, I fear, incidental only. But, as it happens, *A Star is Born* is excellent good hokum. The detail of the acting "business" is particularly good, and the film is finely directed. The less said about its story of rising and waning star values, and all the vanities and ambitions which are the life stream of Hollywood, the better.

REVIEWED

by Basil Wright

The Edge of the World

A British Independent film, directed by Michael Powell, with Niall Macginnis, Belle Chrystal and John Laurie.

The High Command

An A.B.F.D. film, directed by Thorold Dickinson, with Steve Geray, Lionel Atwill, Lucie Mannheim and Tom Gill.

MICHAEL Powell turned up some years ago as the first director of English quickies to show signs of knowing how to make good films. But after his early efforts (like *Rynox*) he disappeared somewhat from the critical ken. Now we may assume that in the interval he was maturing his technique and knowledge in order to burst upon us with *The Edge of the World*, which is as near as anything a masterpiece.

When film companies go on location with a bunch of actors and a story, documentalists (and others) usually shudder in advance at the hotchpotch of bogus sunsets and studio afterthoughts which will inevitably make the bulk of the film. Powell is no documentalist, as witness some aspects of the story he has chosen, but he is nevertheless that rarity among film directors—a human being who can express himself in simple terms of humanity.

His location was the island of Foula, and the controlling factor in his story is a restatement of what happened to St. Kilda—the decision by the inhabitants to evacuate the island because an impoverished soil would no longer sustain their cattle and their crops and because the tyrannous trawlers were desolating their immemorial fishing grounds. At this the eyes of certain documentalists gleam, and the script is as good as written.

Not so Powell, who is employed by a commercial firm. He takes a story with frankly melodramatic elements—the Calvinist old man who won't face modern facts; the family feud which separates girl and boy, though not before the procreation of an illegitimate babe, which subsequently gets involved in diphtheria and a ride to the rescue through a raging ocean; a cliff climbing contest which ends in tragic disaster; and so on. Hack stuff, you may say. But note that these melodramatic little incidents do happen; they happen, however, over a period of years, and not all at once, and it is crowding them all together into one tight little story which gives an air of unreality. In this sense the story of *The Edge of the World* is undoubtedly forced. But Powell has, one feels, seen the other point and has treated each incident for its isolated worth as something which might happen—probably has happened—in a remote island community. The result is that even if the basic conflict between melodramatics and tragedy has not been properly resolved, at least a genuine portrait has been achieved, a movingly real atmosphere established, and, further, something extra has been added to the æsthetic of cinema.

Poor Sassenach that I am, and subject to correction from the superior sense of my colleague across the page—yet I feel the impact of a genuine portrayal in the presentation of this story. It is not merely that the little details which make up the total effect of a good landscape have been brilliantly collated and presented; it is rather that the feelings and actions of real people living under certain conditions have been most truthfully and movingly pieced together. What Powell has done with his actors—his professional actors—will forever be an astonishment to me. The restraint of his direction—and, let it be said, the brilliance of Palmer, his cameraman—has enabled them to combine successfully with the ordinary islanders who also play a large part in the film. This is not to say that the acting is perfect. John Laurie and Belle Chrystal lapse sometimes into a reminder of a world we would like to forget; the wonder is they lapse so seldom; more wonder still that Niall Macginnis should lapse not at all. But in general the actors do become a part of the island, and for this they deserve much credit.

The film, however, is exciting chiefly because its direction, its photography and its cutting create sequence after sequence with guts as well as loveliness. Atmosphere there is in plenty—in fact the very weather controls the mood of each scene—but more than this, such sequences as the church service reproduce something fundamental and sincere which so many of us have been trained so painfully to forget. The film is indeed full of things we have forgotten—as that gnats dance on even if Romeo is separated from Juliet, that seagulls will continue to fly long after the warm houses have fallen into decay, or that there is something quite matter-of-fact about a winter gale.

One could blether for ever about *The Edge of the World*, and still not explain its wholly personal fascination. Maybe sophisticated people will find it embarrassing; so much the worse for them. For myself I can only end with a slam; why use the most artificial of sound effects on such a non-artificial film? The concealed orchestra frequently comes near to bringing a good sequence down to the level of *Sanders of the River* or *King Solomon's Mines*—and neither the visuals nor the natural sounds give reason to suppose it was necessary.

FROM a more sophisticated world comes Thorold Dickinson, whose work for Basil Dean's Studios at Ealing, and for the Film Society movement in this country, has been so little appreciated that the qualities of his

"The Edge of the World"

first directorial effort have come as a surprise to many (including the cinema which gave it its première and couldn't believe till the last minute that the public wanted it for a second week).

The High Command is handicapped from the start by a murder-mystery so drearily complicated that it is not worth the telling. It has obviously forced Dickinson back into exploiting technique, with the result that the film in this respect reaches a higher standard of excellence than many more ambitious English productions. The sound recording, in particular, is quite brilliant in its sense of perspective and absence of ground noise.

Dickinson, too, knows how to handle his actors, and has had the sense to choose an unorthodox but very effective cast.

After a false start over an ambush scene during the Irish troubles, the film gets into its stride; not so much in terms of its story as in its creation of the atmosphere attaching to a one-horse port on the West Coast of Africa. Dickinson shot his backgrounds on location, and shot them well, but he also did some acute snooping on the mental and physical characteristics of the local whites. The result is that we get a pretty picture of how people look and behave in a really god-awful climate which they were never born to stand. It is this not unkind presentation which gives the film its value and marks Dickinson as a good director. The scene of the court martial, with its mingling of frigid politeness, suspense, and the merciless bullying of native witnesses, is excellent; better still is a brilliant exposition of the arrival of the Governor at "The Club." As "God Save the King" is played a squall of wind blows open the windows and generally creates a minor havoc, but not a soul moves till the anthem ends; a very pretty piece of work.

It's now up to someone to give Dickinson a good story; his talent deserves it.

Review of the Month

They Won't Forget

(Mervyn LeRoy—Warner Brothers.)
Claude Rains, Allyn Joslyn, Edward Norris, Gloria Dickson.

The fact that it is a sociological screen drama should not keep any one away from *They Won't Forget*. Although it is a powerful and moving indictment of mob violence and lynch law, it is no tract. On the contrary, it is a brilliant and gripping melodrama. There is no more overt propaganda in the film than there is in any work of art that sets a personal tragedy firmly against the forces of its time. Ward Greene's sombre novel of sectional bigotry, "Death in the Deep South," has supplied an essentially dramatic and striking theme. Mervyn LeRoy has taken it and fashioned it with great skill and integrity into a memorable motion picture.

It takes its place naturally with *Fury* and *Black Legion* as one of Hollywood's infrequent but exciting excursions into the sinister social expressions of our civilisation. In my opinion it is finer than either of them. *They Won't Forget* is much more than the screen record of a specific mob murder. There is a dispassionate perspective in the script and in Mr. LeRoy's consummate direction that makes this a universal and abiding arraignment of intolerance and crowd fury. The analysis of the motives and forces involved is searching and incontrovertible, but it is never self-conscious. It cuts through to the core of the "hatred, fear, and prejudice" that dominates the narrative and yet does so in terms of smashing dramatic action.

Mr. LeRoy has shown himself a shrewd director in the past, with a flair for screen values, but never has he demonstrated such mature artistry. His handling of the material in *They Won't Forget* is always soundly imaginative. It is a community he has to consider, rather than isolated individuals and he never shirks the task. With a restless camera, subtle suggestion, and adroit editing, he brings the whole Southern town of Flodden to the screen and keeps it clearly in focus as a Northern schoolteacher is convicted of a girl's murder on specious circumstantial evidence, is given a commutation of sentence by an upright governor and is ruthlessly executed by a lynching party.

"D.A. on his way to the Senate . . ."

"Mob violence and lynch law . . ."

The most unforgettable sequences in the production are achieved by understatement. The lynching itself is a masterly piece of oblique camera narration. As Hale, the schoolteacher, is being taken to the penitentiary, the train is stopped and he is pushed screaming into the mob. The train gathers momentum again and at a way station there is a close-up of a mailbag dangling from a cross bar which is suddenly jerked into space. When the girl is assaulted and killed, you see her standing in a deserted classroom, stiffening with instinctive fear as she hears ominous footsteps in the corridor, and then, with hair-trigger timing, the image lap dissolves into a volley of muskets at a Memorial Day celebration. The cumulative effect of episodes such as these gives *They Won't Forget* an almost intolerable burden of suspense and terror.

—Howard Barnes, *The New York Herald Tribune*

Two indictments of lynching appear almost simultaneously: the film, *They Won't Forget*, and Don Tracy's new novel, "How Sleeps the Beast."* The book has been highly praised, and deservedly so, for it is a skilful, ruthless account of the lynching of a negro, sparing none of the sickening detail. But how much more effective as propaganda is the film, though it has much less licence for horror. Tracy's story and characters seem unimportant adjuncts to the lynching episode; the film, on the other hand, is an enthralling drama in which the lynching grows inevitably out of the circumstances, the atmosphere and the people.

Tracy's negro commits the crime for which he is lynched. The victim in the film does not; at least the evidence is insufficient and points to another. A schoolgirl is murdered. The first suspect is a negro and the police are prepared to grill a confession out of him. Not so the District Attorney, played brilliantly by Claude Rains. He sees bigger game than a negro when circumstances lead him to Hale, a northerner, and the girl's schoolteacher: convict him and District Attorney Andy Griffiths is on his way to the Senate.

Bit by bit the atmosphere is created in which conviction is inevitable, whatever the evidence. From the first half-humorous, half-sad shot of Civil War veterans waiting to march in the memorial parade to the Confederate dead, to the final fatal plea of the accused against prejudice, we see the mounting hostility of South and North upon which the prosecutor really depends for his success. "It's the Civil War over again," shouts a reporter, as the Northern papers accuse "Southern prejudice" and Southern anger mounts against Northern interference.

The opening parade; the slow drawl of the South contrasting with the sharper clip of Northern tones; the moaning fear-stricken negro; the ominous quiet of the fanning crowds round the court-house ("It's a funny crowd, they're so quiet," says the reporter); the tense silence of the court-room, broken by murmurs of anger or applause or by sharp interjections; the grim hate of the mill-worker brothers of the dead girl ("We know how it's going to end"); the hopelessness of the defence's fight against it all; the honest governor who sacrifices his career to reprieve the victim, only to prepare the way for the lynching—all this is part of a brilliantly-built picture of the people and their environment.

The film grips to the end—the reporters question to the D.A.: "You know, Andy, now that it's all over, I wonder if Hale really did it," and the reply: "I wonder." It has *Fury* whacked to a standstill. Mervyn LeRoy has enlisted all the tricks of the trade and a deal of hokum in the service of progressive cinematic propaganda and keeps us on the edge of our seats all the way through.

A dramatically presented slice of life that shows up alarmingly the long way that British films have to travel before even beginning to equal such a truly great picture as this.

—Richard Carr, *World Film News*

Critical Summary.

When Fritz Lang directed "Fury" he proved to Hollywood that highly controversial subjects could be presented without loss at the box-office. M.G.M. made "Fury" in some trepidation. Its success surprised them. Hollywood, of course, has done good work in condemning racketeering, graft and corruption, but mob violence is a very different thing. Feeling is so strong in the Southern States that one would have expected the studios to sit on the fence and say nothing. But "Fury" successfully started the campaign against lynching and now "They Won't Forget" has most ably carried it forward.

"Moaning, fear-stricken Negro . . ."

*Constable, 7s. 6d.

Feature Films for October Release

This is not a complete list of current releases, but a *W.F.N.* selection. While all poor and mediocre films are omitted from the list, inclusion does not necessarily infer outstanding merit. For the guidance of our readers, films starred in *Review of Reviews* are again starred.

Last of Mrs. Cheyney (M.G.M.) *
DIRECTOR: Richard Boleslawski
STARRING: Joan Crawford
William Powell
Robert Montgomery

Lost Horizon (Columbia) *
DIRECTOR: Frank Capra
STARRING: Ronald Colman
Jane Wyatt
John Howard
Edward Everett Horton
Isabel Jewell
H. B. Warner
Margo

They Gave Him a Gun (M.G.M.) *
DIRECTOR: W. S. Van Dyke
STARRING: Spencer Tracy
Franchot Tone
Gladys George

You Only Live Once (United Artists) *
DIRECTOR: Fritz Lang
STARRING: Sylvia Sidney
Henry Fonda
Jean Dixon
William Gargan

God's Country and the Woman (First National)
DIRECTOR: William Keighley
STARRING: George Brent
Beverly Roberts

Her Husband Lies (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Edward Ludwig
STARRING: Ricardo Cortez
Gail Patrick

History is Made at Night (United Artists)
DIRECTOR: Frank Borzage
STARRING: Charles Boyer
Jean Arthur
Leo Carrillo
Colin Clive

Penny Pool (Mancunian)
DIRECTOR: George Black, Jr.
STARRING: Douglas Wakefield
Tommy Fields
Louanne Shaw

Quality Street (Radio)
DIRECTOR: George Stevens
STARRING: Katharine Hepburn
Franchot Tone
Fay Bainter
Cora Witherspoon

Seventh Heaven (20th Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: Henry King
STARRING: James Stewart
Simone Simon

Slave Ship (20th Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: Tay Garnett
STARRING: Warner Baxter
Wallace Beery
Elizabeth Allen
Mickey Rooney
Joseph Schildkraut

And the month's Western:

Borderland (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Nate Watt
STARRING: William Boyd
James Ellison

W.F.N. Selection

They Won't Forget * * *

A Star is Born * *

The Edge of the World *

Souls at Sea *

Other Films Covered in this Issue

Farr-Louis Fight Newsreel

Broadway Melody of 1938

The High Command

Wake Up and Live

Artists and Models

The Emperor's Candlesticks

High, Wide and Handsome

Action for Slander

The Road Back

His Affair

Call It a Day

Cotton Queen

A Castle in Flanders

Die Tochter der Samurai

Souls at Sea

(Henry Hathaway—Paramount.)
Gary Cooper, George Raft, Frances Dee, Henry Wilcoxon, Olympe Bradna.

Inevitably, since Mr. Gary Cooper takes the chief part, this account of a shipwreck in the last century and the subsequent trial is much altered from history, though it is unusual that the changes should be confessed. Charged with manslaughter after the wreck of the *William Brown*, Mr. Cooper must still be the perfect hero of a novel by Mr. Hemingway and at the same time Mr. Deeds in person. It must be admitted that he manages virtue extremely well, even when it is of one particular kind and has to be repeated again and again, no doubt as a result of the obsessional repetition-compulsion from which the films suffer. His humanitarianism always seems genuine, and if anyone could manage the martyrdoms and misunderstandings that result from pretending to be a slaver in order to check the slave-trade it would be Mr. Cooper. For the rest the film is full of horrors and adventures, culminating in a truly appalling shipwreck which only the strongest nerves could accept as entertainment.

—*The Times*

Lord, but this film deserves so much more space than I can give it, so much more recommendation than the printed word can ensure! Its climax shows the burning of a boat. I shall now burn mine, by proclaiming it the best picture I have seen in 1937. I know that its tragedy moved me profoundly; that its spectacle stirred admiration uninterrupted by a single sneer; that its quick, shy humour made me laugh more *comfortably* than ever before; that its photography is fine, its acting finer, its direction by Henry Hathaway finest of all.

—Paul Dehn, *The Sunday Referee*

Artists and Models

(Raoul Walsh—Paramount.)
Jack Benny, Gail Patrick, Ida Lupino.

Artists and Models I found staggeringly bad, incredibly inept, boring beyond the wildest flights of the imagination. To do it justice would require the pen of an O. O. McIntyre. The picture is a loosely put together collection of vaudeville acts, with Jack Benny loosely thrown in for good measure. *Artists and Models* is, I think, so bad that you ought to go and see it. Then go home and sit down and think of the hundreds and hundreds of people concerned in its production.

—Russell Maloney, *The New Yorker*

The Emperor's Candlesticks

(George Fitzmaurice—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
William Powell, Luise Rainer.

Personally I do not believe in William Powell as a Polish Count, carrying a message to the Tsar to pardon a patriot while the Tsarevitch is held in Paris. Miss Rainer as a Russian agent is more credible, and, anyway, both are charming. The story is avowedly fictitious, and, indeed, it is hard to reconcile a long-bearded Tsar with glimpses of the Eiffel Tower and the Tower Bridge; but good entertainment of the suspenseful order is provided, decorative and well-populated. The candlesticks are each hollow, for the convenient concealment of vital documents, and Frank Morgan, Robert Young and Maureen O'Sullivan fulfil their contract obligations very agreeably.

—P. L. Mannock, *The Daily Herald*

They say that the stars in this picture are the hero of *Libelled Lady* and the heroine of *The Good Earth*. I don't believe it. No company could waste such talent on quite such pitiful material as this ridiculous story of undated intrigue for Polish nationalism. The dialogue attempts to graft Noel Coward on to William Le Queux; the production, to mingle Lubitsch with the serial thrillers of silent days 20 years ago. Even the

". . . Decorative and suspenseful"

The Emperor's Candlesticks—

continued.

charm of Powell, in fur coat and cap, breaks down at the cruel stupidity and stark impossibility of the task. But such ineptitude of acting and direction pales in insignificance before the colossal, world-shaking, breath-taking (for once cinematic superlatives are justified) incarnate stupidity that will waste the delicious charm of Frank Morgan, the romantic talent of Robert Young, the latent power of Maureen O'Sullivan, the unfailing graciousness of Henry Stephenson, the genius of Luise Rainer, and the comedic magic of William Powell on a story that is improbable without being fantastic; a drama that does not grip; a chase that has no suspense; and a film that is barely worth the print to condemn it.

—Guy Ramsey, *The News Chronicle*

High, Wide and Handsome

(Rouben Mamoulian—Paramount.)
Irene Dunne, Randolph Scott.

The old Irene Dunne, not the new groomed Dunne of *Theodora Goes Wild*, appears in *High, Wide and Handsome*. She plays a showgirl, oh so generous and unspoilt, in the 1850's, who loves and marries a Pennsylvanian farmer. He discovers oil, gets too busy fighting the wicked railroad trusts, neglects her; so she goes back to the road and returns only in the nick of time with the elephants and trick riders of her circus to defeat the hired toughs who are breaking up his pipelines. There are two hours of this long, dumb and dreary picture; the story doesn't really get under way for an hour; and one is left with a few dim distressing memories: Miss Dunne splashing and kerning away in her bathtub: Miss Dunne singing beside the farm horse (Miss Dunne is the one without the white patch on her forehead): a song by Mr. Kern about "Darby and Joan who used to be Jack and Jill," and masses of irrelevant Mamoulian blooms flowering at the right, the sentimental, time: nature panting to keep abreast with studio passions, flowering for first love and falling for separation.

—Graham Greene, *Night and Day*

Dorothy Lamour—'High, Wide and Handsome.'

It is made up of all the most appealing ingredients of comedy, drama, romance, excitement, stern adventures, startling realism and extravagant fiction. It is relieved by the most tuneful of songs. Rouben Mamoulian, its director, has given us something of everything. It is amazing how, in spite of endless variety, he keeps his creation well-knit and balanced. It is made on the epic scale. Irene Dunne is always pleasing, always interesting to watch, always, when she sings, melodious. In a picture so full of crowded action, a picture of such spaciousness, and among the masses of supporting players, it is next to impossible for one particular artist to dominate the proceedings. But of Irene Dunne it can truthfully be said that whenever she appears she makes the charm of her presence felt. Randolph Scott has not been seen to better advantage than in this spectacular musical drama of the oil-fields. This mixture of natural comedy and forceful drama was so good that it might have been inspired.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

Critical Summary.

Here is one of those intriguing films over which the critics cannot agree, so that for each one that thinks it good there is another who hotly condemns it. But that it is good entertainment seems undeniable, and no doubt the adverse criticism would not have been so strong if this had not been the work of Rouben Mamoulian who, at his best, is one of the most gifted directors in Hollywood.

Action for Slander

(Tim Whelan—London Films.)
Clive Brook, Ann Todd, Margaretta Scott.

It takes courage to make a film like *Action for Slander*. Its people and its problems are out of screen fashion. It is concerned with country house colonels and their ladies, the honour of the regiment, and rotters who will ruin a man's life by accusing him of cheating at cards, by gad! Victor Saville and Tim Whelan, the producer and director, have made their too often caricatured characters very real. The action provides one of the most gripping court scenes ever shown on the screen. It is also one of the most amusing—thanks to Morton Selton's brilliant cameo of a lovable old Father Christmas of a judge.

—R. N., *The Star*

There is a type of genteel British picture in which the characters, anxious to talk and help the plot along and having nothing else to do, spend their time lighting cigarettes, drinking whisky and shaking cocktails. In *Action for Slander* this school of movie technique reaches its height. Everybody consumes alcohol. At a shoot, miles out in the country, they suddenly cluster round the Scotch and start talking scandal. The film, otherwise, is good; definitely decent in a polite way. Clive Brook is the bounder who plays poker rather too well, and has the impudence to love a fellow-officer's wife. Brook, Margaretta Scott, Ann Todd and Edward Chapman talk becomingly over the various whiskies, brandies and cocktails which give them something to hold in their hands. When not doing this they light their cigarettes with bravado. I thought Selton waltzed away with the picture. I shall see it again.

—Connery Chappell, *The Sunday Dispatch*

The Road Back

(James Whale—Universal.)
John King, Richard Cromwell, "Slim" Summerville, Andy Devine, Barbara Read.

Remarque's "The Road Back" was a savage and bitter sifting of the ashes of war, the poignant record of the lives of a group of young German soldiers who tried to find the road back to life after they had spent four years with death. Universal's *The Road Back* is not that. It is an approximation of the novel; it is touched occasionally with the author's bleak spirit. But most of the time it goes its own Hollywooden-headed way, playing up the comedy, melodramatising rather than dramatising, reaching at the last toward a bafflingly inconclusive conclusion.

It is distressing to watch the mutilation of a great theme. Remarque was not writing a comedy; Universal appears not to have recognised that. Remarque was not writing a satire; Universal has not realised that either. As though it were dealing with a routine comedy of the

"The mutilation of a great theme . . ."

trenches, it elected Andy Devine to play Willy; it chose Slim Summerville to be an antic Tjaden. The armistice itself has become a matter of comedy. The agonising journey home—of which Remarque wrote with longing and prayer—has been told in terms of slapstick, of French tavern revels and soldiers' choruses. In a way, I envy those who have not read the book: they should have a fine time at the picture, breathing the fire of the early war scenes, marvelling at the sweep of Mr. Whale's cameras, revelling in the mob riots, the lift and surge and humour of Dimitri Tiomkin's expressive musical score.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

Clowning and sentimentalising and melodramatics throw the picture out of focus. Remarque's bitter picture of post-war Germany loses all taste when they try to make it bittersweet. Yet it has moments when the spectator divines the great film it might have been.

—Meyer Levin, *Esquire*

His Affair

(William A. Seiter—20th Century-Fox.)
Robert Taylor, Barbara Stanwyck, Victor McLaglen.

"Period" melodrama of the America of something less than fifty years ago is the subject of *His Affair*. This is a strong picture, tensely directed by William A. Seiter, and extremely well acted by all the members of a large and competent cast. Its story deals with a secret mission entrusted by President McKinley to a young naval lieutenant to discover the identity of the

man behind a widespread series of bank robberies. The film is packed with action, exciting, and taut with suspense. The characters, too, are well drawn, virile studies, effectively contrasted. Robert Taylor has an excellent part and makes the most of his opportunities. It is, however, the performance of Victor McLaglen as a dunderheaded crook with a passion for practical jokes which is most poignant and memorable.

—M. E. N., *The Sketch*

The story has a touching naivety. It appears that at the beginning of the century the whole of America, and especially the business community, was powerless to cope with a gang of bank robbers, and that President McKinley was reduced to calling in a lieutenant from the Navy to tackle them. It is that sort of story. ("This is our game," says the President to the lootenant. "Yours and mine.") The film, however, is not really so bad as that. Within its own absurd convention it moves with a sort of museum, Boys' Own Paper charm; there are some goodish turns

" Boys' Own Paper charm . . . "

in the music-hall. Mr. Robert Taylor is not so successful. Even in his fiercest moments he looks as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth.

—H. M., *The Sunday Observer*

Call It a Day

(Archie Mayo—Warner Bros.)
Ian Hunter, Frieda Inescort, Olivia de Havilland, Roland Young, Anita Louise, Bonita Granville.

It was a good idea of Dodie Smith's to make a play of a day in the life of an English family, from the morning competition for the bath to the turning-out of the light between the parents' twin beds. London and New York both decided that the play was first-class comedy. And that is my opinion of the film. Archie Mayo, the director, has been content to keep most of the Dodie Smith dialogue and to photograph the action as it was already outlined. But for a few extra scenes to give continuity, *Call It a Day* is the same pleasant, if static, piece of stagecraft, hatched out by Miss Smith in her Essex cottage. The cinema simply presents it to a larger audience. The casting is good—it is to Miss Granville's credit as a personality that while she is on the screen one has eyes and ears for nobody else. Yes, a good cast fitted to display the day's adventures of the Hilton family to best advantage. This is your picture if you want a quiet, domestic comedy.

—Ian Coster, *The Evening Standard*

Miss Dodie Smith writes women's plays; which (seeing that women are easily the dominant sex at the box-office) no doubt helps to account for the great success. *Call It a Day* has something for every woman, from a bad attack of Rossetti-worship by a schoolgirl to her elder sister's crush on a philandering artist and their mother's toying with temptation while her husband almost falls for a conventional vamp of an actress and her son conducts an idyll over the fence with the pretty girl next door. Taking it all in all, it is as sex-conscious a picture as the most vicariously amorous playgoer could desire. But in quite a nice way, you understand.

—Campbell Dixon, *The Daily Telegraph*

Cotton Queen

(Bernard Vorhaus—British Independent Exhibitors.)
Stanley Holloway, Will Fyffe, Jimmy Handley, Mary Lawson.

The British Independent Exhibitors in an attempt to protect themselves against the octopus-like circuits and production monopolies, have decided to make films for themselves. Their first, *Cotton Queen*, will be generally released soon. And if it is indicative of the type of film they intend to make they are going to hit some of the major companies a pretty decent smack on the snoot. *Cotton Queen* has a story that is as old as my Sunday suit, but it is in the treatment that it shows such promise. It is laid in Lancashire and they've got the real Lancashire on the screen. The mill interiors are real mills with real looms, not papier maché arrangements worked by heavily manicured extras. And there is Blackpool fair ground with decent sweaty crowds, and the Tower ball-room full of real Lancashire lassies in home-made evening frocks.

The dialogue fits, another rarity in a British film. It is completely unpretentious, but, because of its reality, makes the audience believe in the characters.

Finally, the film moves fast. It ends up with a perfectly glorious car chase that has seldom been bettered. Altogether a very satisfying film. And the public seem to think the same. Well, their reaction to Cotton Queen seemed to point that they go for a comedy-coated reality in a big way. Let's hope the British Independent Exhibitors keep it up.

A Castle in Flanders

(Geza von Bolvary—German.)
Marta Eggerth.

A Castle in Flanders is a mild and unpretentious film chiefly to be enjoyed for that pleasant feeling of unreality which arises from seeing one's own countrymen portrayed by foreigners. The film is full of "Sir Archibalds" and "Lady Margarets." Most of the important action, however, takes place in a chateau at Ypres, and depends for its effect on an ingeniously presented suggestion of the supernatural (aided materially by the competent direction of Geza von Bolvary). The ghostly elements, whose details it would be unfair to give away, end unfortunately half-way through the picture and for the rest of the time we are free to admire the fine singing of Marta Eggerth and to wonder yet again what attraction is supposed to rest in the close view of a woman's face, however beautiful, with her mouth wide open during a coloratura trill.

—Basil Wright, *The Spectator*

Die Tochter der Samurai

(Dr. Arnold Fanck—German.)

I can speak only from cursory observations and some reading of production announcements, but it appears to me that German studios are mainly occupied nowadays in turning out conventional comedies and solid dramas, acted mostly in a somewhat old-fashioned, heavy-weight style of which Pola Negri, returning to middle-aged fame, is now accepted as a leading exponent. All German films are supervised by Dr. Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda, but they are by no means all dosed with politics. On the contrary, I think the trouble is that German producers are usually afraid to tackle themes which might be held to carry a political inference. Anyway, the only interesting film I came across in Germany was *Die Tochter der Samurai;* and this was also the only one with an obvious political moral.

Its story is of a Japanese student who returns to his own country after years of education in Germany, and on the boat falls more or less in love with a German girl. But he has been betrothed since childhood to a Japanese girl, and now he rebels against this prospect and says that in the West he has learnt the value of individual freedom. The German girl, however, assures him that this was a false teaching, and eventually he is reconciled to his native destiny by renewed experience of his country's *ethos* and contact with the soil of his father's farm. The story is never very strong and becomes melodramatic at the end, when the student has to rescue his Japanese betrothed from a suicide attempt in the crater of Fujiyama; but the Japanese backgrounds are delightful, particularly the sequence showing the education of a Japanese schoolgirl.

—Charles Davy, *The London Mercury*

" Pleasant feeling of unreality "

GAIL WARNING

Lying in bed the other afternoon, sipping a beaker of champagne and thumbing through the *Daily Worker* with our soft, white hands, we happened (in a different paper altogether) upon an item of news which caused us to turn over and go right back to sleep.

The item in question told how Gail Patrick, Hollywood film-star and queen of good fellows, has solved the servant problem. It appears that the Patrick *estancia* is never without its full quota of peons, serfs, or serving-wenches, thanks to Gail's cute little practice of putting all her domestics under "optional contracts," offering a rise in wages at three and six months if their work is good. "It gives them something to strive for," said Miss Patrick, lowering her yashmak long enough to blow a cloud of cigarette smoke at her interviewer, "and I've not yet lost a maid!"

Nice work, Miss Patrick, but I'm afraid we got there before you. We've been using the contract system for our employees for a long time. Take the case of Desirée, the new night-nurse at the *W.F.N.* Home of Rest for Film Critics on Canvey Island. When we discovered her, she was working for a rival firm, but was not happy there. "All they expect me to do is wear beautiful clothes," she sobbed on our shoulder (we can show you the actual shoulder); "why don't they realise us girls have got to express ourselves?"

We gave her sixpennyworth of stamps and told her to express herself round here. She is now under long-term contract to us and is sitting at my feet as I write, the firelight playing on her delicately-chiselled features. You can get away with that when you're firelight.

Naturally, the first thing we had to find for her was a suitable vehicle, so we had the Editor's bicycle done over and placed at her disposal. Advance publicity was the next question, so we had one or two of the boys around to the back room to meet her. Most of them were loud in their praises of our new discovery. The rest were just loud. Even Rube Weinberger, who we knew had been angling for the girl himself, could scarce forbear to congratulate us. "You've got something there," he said, punching us good-humouredly in the stomach; "that's real star-material." "Thanks," we said, our eyes suspiciously bright, kicking him genially on the shin.

Desirée is still with us, and doing better work than ever. She never complains now, as she used to with her old company, that she is getting the wrong kind of stories. We know the kind of stories *she* likes.

And that, kiddies, is how I met your mother.

Thoughts on the Power of the Press, as the Press Calls It

There have been no belly-laughs
In the *Daily Telegraph's*
Pages
For ages.

By wrapping up the *News Chronicle*
So that it is conical
It comes in handy
For carrying candy.

The *Daily Mail*
Is rather frail
And sensitive.
It resents it if
People sneer
At Lord Rothermere—
Which they do,
Don't you?

The *Morning Post*
Concerns itself most
With the glory
Of the Tory.

After it has gone off the press
Members of the *Daily Express*
Always leave a copy on a low table
To enable
Lord Beaverbrook
To have a look.

I may be a prude
But the *Daily Mirror* strikes me as being distinctly rude.

The Times is all society
And piety.

The *Observer* keeps J. L. Garvin
From starvin.

SAYINGS

"I'm no Beauty Queen."

—Nellie Wallace

"I think those women who congregated to see a gentleman named Taylor arrive in London, let down England rather badly."

—The Ex-Mayor of East Ham

"I cannot say that I am in the least excited about the prospect of playing opposite Robert Taylor."

—Maureen O'Sullivan

"I married for love. He's my first husband and my last."

—Tallulah Bankhead

"Hollywood is a magnificent film machine, but in London there is more artistic freedom."

—Leslie Howard

"Those who make the Cheddar Caves and Gorge the subject of cheap wit have no sense of sanctity."

—The Mayor of Nottingham

BEAUTIFUL BUT DUMMY

Owing to the fact that *W.F.N.* is a monthly publication, there are very few wisecracks left uncorked on the subject of Mr. R. Lloyd Barrow, the fifty-year-old Weymouth barrister who threatened to take a dummy partner to local ballrooms. "I've danced a lot with dummy partners," said Mr. Barrow. "I'm in two minds whether to take my favourite dummy Dolores regularly to dances."

"Dolores may be dumb, but she is attractive—and her dancing is always faultless," he added.

As an old dummy-dancer-wither myself, I range myself wholeheartedly on the side of Mr. Barrow. Pioneers, no matter what their sphere, have always met with ridicule, but if you imagine that a few horse-laughs are going to stop Mr. Barrow and myself toting our dummies around this season, you're mistaken. There is a bond between a man and his dummy which is not easily broken.

I shall never forget taking *my* favourite dummy, Miss Pilkington, to her first dance. She was in the first flush of womanhood then, trembling on the threshold of life and without a rent in her fabric. As we swung into the rhythm of the mazurka I knew that we were the cynosure of all eyes. Let them call her a painted doll if they wished, but I loved her, every seam and stitch of her.

All that season we were inseparable, although I was gentleman enough to insist that she always brought her chaperone with her, an old horsehair sofa whom we affectionately called Mama. Only once did anything happen to cloud our perfect partnership. That was on the occasion of the Wardour Street Hunt Ball. Miss Pilkington had persuaded me, much against my better judgment, to attend. Was there a man living who could resist the mute appeal of those limpid eyes? While I was having a couple of drinks —hers and mine—in an alcove, a man came up and begged permission to dance with my partner. Foolishly, I granted it. I might have known from the angle of the man's silk hat and the bottle of port stuffed into the top of his riding-boot that he had been drinking. Watching them from behind a horse, my handsome features suffused with anger, I could see the brute's evil face thrust close to hers, and I could tell from the hot flush on the canvas at the back of her neck what direction his conversation was taking. The last glimpse I had of Miss Pilkington was as she was being thrown across the saddle of the man's hunter and carried away, unresisting, into the night. I noticed with satisfaction, however, that her captor had received a black eye.

My new dummy, whom I have christened Greta, is made of sterner stuff and she has survived a season of film balls and carnivals needing nothing more than a few stitches.

LORUM

Rodney Hobson

Will You Step into My Beauty Parlour?

Idly turning the pages of one of MGM's publicity bulletins, we happened upon some observations, half-grave, half-gay, by Mr. Grantland Rice's little girl Florence, now making a name for herself in pictures. For the benefit of our readers we plucked a fragrant bunch of them at random and reprint them below, whether you like it or not.

"Any man will admit (says Florence) that women are at their loveliest when they are beautifully gowned. Secretaries or shop-girls would be more attractive, and therefore better able to represent the business, if they were to dress to accentuate their beauty.

"One of the highest paying businesses to-day which is almost exclusively represented by men is insurance. But women could probably sell even more policies, because they appeal to a man's protective instinct. Give women a chance to put a few feminine touches in business and there would never be another depression."

You're telling *us*, Miss Rice? It's quite obvious you've never been to our office, which is known to Wardour Street as the Temple of Venus or the Hall of Human Harps. Our staff are all ex-Railway Queens and look like a million dollars. They spend every penny of their salaries on themselves.

As soon as you enter (which will be pretty soon now, eh?) a lovely creature swathed in a tight-fitting gown and emanating a subtle, provocative perfume, sidles up to you and says in a sibilant whisper, "And what the heck do you want?" She then takes your hat, files it under "Miscellaneous" (which is flattering your hat) and motions you to a divan, softly lit and heaped with silken cushions. It may be a bit crowded, but stick around, brother.

At an onyx switchboard sits our telephone operator. She is dazzlingly beautiful and will one day be able to answer the telephone. At present all she does is to resist the advances of the sub-editors, acknowledged to be among the hardest advances to resist.

Hers is the haunting beauty that drives men mad. Three editors have already hurled themselves into Oxford Street (a street with enough troubles of its own without that happening) and a fourth is waiting for favourable weather conditions before making the attempt. But the majority of us are level-headed enough and have schooled ourselves to look upon the glamorous creatures in our midst as pieces of furniture, dusting them occasionally and every now then stubbing our toe against them as hard as we jolly well can. After all, mere pulchritude counts for nothing unless beauty of the spirit goes with it. And that, I think, is why so many of the visitors to our office ignore the temptresses and make straight for *my* little den. A lovely soul still counts for something.

But to revert to Miss Rice. That idea of women selling insurance appeals to us. This is how we picture it:

Lovely Insurance Lady: When's your next birthday?
Poor Wretched Man: Did anyone ever tell you . . . you were lovely?
L.I.L.: Do you drink to excess?
P.W.M.: Why should I—when you are here to intoxicate me with your charm?
L.I.L.: Any insanity?
P.W.M.: Only that I'm madly in love with you.
L.I.L.: It will mature at 60.
P.W.M.: Our love is already ripe . . . over-ripe. May I kiss you?
L.I.L.: On the dotted line, please.

METEOROLOGICAL NOTE

"How the knights *are* drawing in," as the Lady Genevieve said, looking down at the row of chargers parked beneath her casement.

* * *

Taylor's Dummy

"Man Goes Dumb in Cinema" runs a headline.

Didn't I say all we men would soon be imitating that good-looking Mr. R.b.rt T.y.or?

The Intelligent Boy's Guide to Fleet Street

Put down that volume of Freud, sonny boy,
And come over here to your Dadda.
I've decided how you'll be employed, sonny boy,
When of fame you start climbing the ladder.
I'll make you a newspaper magnate, my lad,
And the ladder you'll climb, wrong by wrong;
Of course, there is many a snag 'n it, my lad,
But here's how you'll best get along:

Take pages and pages of pictures,
Add columns and columns on sports;
Then sprinkle with features
By epicene creatures
Expressing their pale-pink thoughts.
Spread thickly with sex and sensation,
Add anything slightly obscene.
If you SHOULD *have the space*
Then you MIGHT *find a place*
For a line or two of intelligent comment on world affairs, not that any of your readers will know what the heck you mean.

(*United Artists*)

"Patience your Majesty—there's a train smash in the next reel."

THEY SAY—

"Strip-tease for the sensitive"

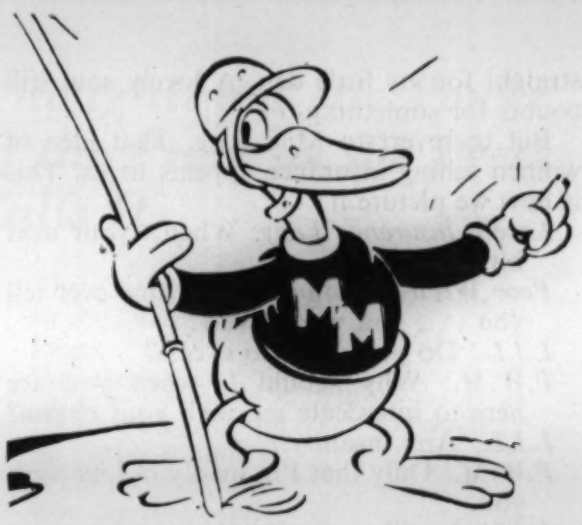
Burlesque having been banished from this city by order of the Commissioner of Licences, a new art is a-borning. Now a citizen can promenade through the town secure in the knowledge that his sensibilities will not be harassed by wanton photographs of girls on the sidewalk bulletin boards. Ever since Commissioner Moss removed burlesque from the theatre last May the whole town has taken on a more wholesome appearance. The cheeks of the people in the streets are fresher, the flesh is firmer, the eyes are brighter and men have shown a gratifying willingness to go home at night.

But the new art of burlesque is still adapted to the special needs of students of anatomy. Like all soundly motivated art, it has form. In the lavish production numbers with their exotic dances and tropical music, glum girls dutifully stand up stage in artistic and unhampered poses. Fortunately, the strip-tease has been entirely eliminated. But some of the former strip-tease artistes have kept pace with the advance of civilisation by mastering new routines suited to their peculiar abilities. Margie Hart, "the sweetheart of Broadway," and one of the most cultivated of the pre-reform clothes antagonists, was the current leading lady of the Eltinge Follies. She was loyally greeted when she first appeared to deliver a rhymed lament for the old days of unrighteousness. Modishly attired in a becoming evening gown she was only the husk of her normal friendly self. But later in the programme the management found an opportunity to offer her in a delicately veiled votary dance that beautifully displayed her best features in a sensational climax. Art has purged the infamous strip-tease of its impropriety.

At the Apollo the neatly jointed Ann Corio has become a dramatic actress. The flamboyancy of the strip-tease has given way to a retiring dramatic incident that innocently discovers many aspects of her personality. The dramatic improvisation is as follows: In a daintily acted prelude a celebrated actress is revealed at the door of her home, generously autographing the book of an abashed admirer. He leaves, she sighs and pensively enters the house. The chief action of the drama occurs in her bedroom. Pure, silent and alone, she languidly disrobes and goes unobtrusively to bed. In the acting of this nocturne her art is peerlessly naturalistic. It is immeasurably more poetic than the hackneyed strip-tease that robbed burlesque of its originality. As a dramatic nudist Miss Corio has broad scope for her powers.

Curiously enough the audience seems unable to distinguish sharply between the old burlesque and the new art which is rising phœnixlike from the strip-tease ashes. But any one trained in the subtleties of the dramatic art can easily appreciate the difference. The anatomy lesson, which was once shrouded in mysterious light, is now conducted on a bright stage against scenery. Once it corrupted the unwary; now it inspires lovers of beauty and nourishes the intellect. It is more sensitive in tone. In short, it is gratifying to realise that the old burlesque theatres are turning their talents to higher things.

—Brooks Atkinson, *New York Times*



"A flurry, a squawk —turmoil"

On to the stage in *The Orphans' Benefit* there strode one whose voice was loud and raucous, whose bearing was domineering, whose attitude was pugnacious and whose manner was insolent in the extreme. He had come to recite "Little Boy Blue" to the assembled orphans, and he was going to recite "Little Boy Blue" or burst. If ever a performer asked for things to be thrown at him, it was he. In short, Donald Duck had arrived.

The cinema has never been quite the same since. The two lovers melt into a lingering, ecstatic embrace, the music swells to a crescendo, and another epic fades to its close. For a moment we rest in blissful reverie, enraptured by Romance; then there is a flurry, a squawk—turmoil. And Romance is gone.

This duck has above all else a genius for disorganisation. Looking back on his long and varied career it is hard to think of a single crisis in which he has, by his presence, done anything but get in the way and cause a disturbance, nor has he ever been of any practical assistance or done anything which has not added to the general confusion. A "tough guy" and an extremely noisy one, he is yet totally incapable of coping with any emergency, and although inspired by considerable determination and self-confidence, he quickly loses his head in moments of stress, dancing up and down in his agitation and quickly upsetting everyone else. As an orator of the "Down with everything" school he would be an instant success in Hyde Park, and when heckled would fly into such a frenzy that he would probably disintegrate with rage. He did, on one memorable occasion, split himself into four when his emotion became too great to be contained in one body.

He is, in brief, a denial of everything that Hollywood holds to be "good form," for he is noisy, conceited, and aggressive, yet wholly lacking in fistic ability, unsentimental, unpractical, inefficient, and insolent, the perfect and glorious antidote for anyone who is suffering from a surfeit of film sportsmanship and "class." In a world of repression, conformation to convention, and inarticulate expression, he stands out as one who calls a spade a spade—and then tries to hit everybody over the head with it.

—*The Times*

"Penny-in-the-Slot Education"

Mr. H. G. Wells' value to his day and age as a disturber of complacency was never better illustrated than in his indictment of our education system delivered before the British Association. It will shake up the thoughts of every person interested in education, except the incurably self-satisfied.

During a long lifetime Mr. Wells has exhibited an immense interest in what people know and think and believe. He is not impressed by his researches. He thinks the public intelligence feeble and uninstructed. He blames, above all, our elementary education, because it does not tell young people enough about the world in which they are to live. The natural curiosity of every child is worth something better, he says, than a magic recital beginning "William the Conqueror, 1066," which passes for history, and a chanting of lists of capes and rivers, which is dignified by the name of geography.

The children of to-day begin life with a startling affection for animals, an urgent curiosity about cars and aeroplanes, an uncannily swift perception of the great forces of electricity and wireless. All around them are facts, hard and interesting, vivid and stimulating. The schools' task is to canalise and satisfy this abounding natural inquisitiveness.

Up to this point we agree with Mr. Wells, yet at the risk of being considered obscurantist, we think elementary education has made strides. Mr. Gradgrind—"Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities"—wanted boys and girls to be taught nothing but facts. We know that Mr. Wells does not wish children to be taught simply those facts that have seemed transcendently important to him, but there is a danger of more rigid characters falling into that attitude of mind. Even in those up-to-date schools, which take B.B.C. afternoon programmes and show documentary films, there may be such an insistence on "facts—hard facts" of the wider world as to thwart the true genius of education as such a reformer as Dalton conceived it. The heirs of Gradgrind would not be beyond using the wireless and the films for their utilitarian purposes.

What is most lacking in our educational system—it applies to the universities and the elementary schools—is the faculty of wonder, the capacity to keep the young mind perpetually alive to the miracles of daily life, to the incredible adventure of this world into which it is born. The natural zest of the human animal is too soon quenched. The child's eyes become dulled. Custom and convention bind their icy chains around the eager spirit.

Education should be a series of slight earthquake shocks rather than a sleeping draught. We need seismic disturbances to shatter the old stereotypes of thought, the meaningless patterns of behaviour, the penny-in-the-slot responses to given situations, the soporific platitudes of phrase and conduct, the dull acceptance of the third-rate. For his part in waking and shaking the complacent educationist Mr. Wells merits something more flattering than praise—he deserves imitation.

—*The Star*

WHAT SAY THEY?

"Peep-Show Critics"

How many people, not in the film business, could tell you the names of any film critics?

They would say that they had film reviews to find out what was on and who was in it and what it was all about, and not because of any personal interest in the reviewer or what he had to say.

And the fault is not that of the film critics but of the system under which they work. It is a bad system, damaging not only to those who work under it but to the status and industry which gave it birth.

It is the system of considering and dealing with all film criticism as reportorial stuff.

It is the editorial refusal to acknowledge that the films deserve the dignity of criticism, the editorial attitude, heartily pre-war, of treating the cinema as if it were still in its penny-peep-show-on-the-sidewalks stage, of making the reviewers deal with it as news, collect stories about it, write up around a film, tell of the action, the "new" Miss So-and-so, Director Smith's million-dollar success, a fresh "star"—do anything, in fact, but pay it the tribute of considered criticism.

Reporters are wanted for the job; the reportorial mentality is encouraged; the critic has the reporter's status—no more. It's a very good and honourable status, but it's the wrong one for a critic.

It's a system adjusted to a dead epoch, and it's stultifying to the films and to their makers.

It is perfectly true, of course, that most films don't deserve serious criticism. No more do a good many plays.

Yet James Agate, Charles Morgan, Ivor Brown *et al* go to see them, write about them and educate their readers by the expression of their personal reactions. And when a good play does come along both reader and theatre benefit by reading the opinions and analyses of men whose work has insight, imagination, care, and style.

Whereas, when a good film comes along there is almost no one to say anything in the least illuminating about it, no critic allowed to express the sum of its effect on a highly-trained and sensitised mind.

"A critic's proper task," wrote A. B. Walkley, "is first to put himself in the artist's place and recreate the work within himself; then to excogitate a judgment and put it into literary form.

"Now, it is a deplorable fact that many critics never address themselves to this, their proper task. Their desire for sympathy is too much for them and instead of scrutinising their own impressions, they speculate about other people's."

So does the film critic. He tries to tell you what you will think of this or that picture, to gauge the public reaction. He has to, not because of desire for sympathy, but because his status is such that his own opinions and reactions don't matter.

"In justice to himself, his readers, and the film industry, it is high time that it was decided—whether film criticism is a profession, a job, or a stepping-stone."

—Margery Rowland, *The Era*

"Four Head Clowns in a Hundred Years"

Grock

There have been only four head clowns in England during the last hundred years. Whimsical Walker held the position for nearly forty years. Before him there was Harry Payne—well remembered by many not-such-very-old fogies; and before him there was Tom Matthews, remembered by relations of his who are on the stage to-day; and before him there was the greatest clown of all. I mean Joseph Grimaldi, who thus, although he died in 1837, is not so far removed from our generation.

Who is taking his place? The answer is obvious. It is *Auguste* who makes you laugh. Grock is an Auguste, and two of the Bronetts are Augustes—one of them I am sorry to have to tell you, has just died. Charlie Chaplins—there are many of them now—are a branch of the same family. Auguste wore clothes made for other people. Like Harlequin three hundred years ago, the clown who was to become the Grimaldi clown two hundred years ago, and other clowns right back to the age when the first joke and the first clown were born, Auguste is a thing of shreds and patches.

The present fashion is for Augustes to work in pairs, so that one may score off the other, and it looks as though the old process is happening all over again. The clever Auguste in the suit too large for him is beginning to feel superior, and he who gets slapped is becoming a distinct type—a worried little man, rather like a struggling, unsuccessful stockbroker, with a suit too small for him, a hankering after respectability, and a desire to keep up appearances, even when all those little drops of water are drenching him. We shall have to find a new name for this clown—the one so newly hatched.

Plainly enough the transformation begins with a not unnatural desire to slap instead of being slapped. I think the history of laughter may be discovered in this relationship between the knave and his victim the butt. Just suppose for a moment that all clownship begins with the slippery slide, the stumble and the fall. Very well, the next joke after the mishap which is suffered, must be the mishap which is caused—in other words, the slap, the kick or the blow. There you have a pair of jokes corresponding to the pair of clowns.

According to the way I look at knockabout humour, there are only eight jokes, and the other six all pair off in this way. There are, for example, the joke of the Blunderer who isn't such a fool as he looks, and the joke of the Superior Person who comes to grief through his own cleverness. The third pair includes the joke of Mimicry—every kind of comic imitation from the pantomime horse to yourself trying to amuse the children by crawling about on all fours; with this goes the joke of Excessive Delight which the simple feel when mistaking the unreal for the real.

The remaining pair are the joke of Misconduct, such as stealing your best friend's bottle of beer, and the joke of False Alarm—one representing the criminal instincts of the dare-devil clown, and the other the craven instincts of the cowardly clown. All the tricks that clowns get up to are these eight jokes in some shape or another, and what may appear at first sight to be a brand new joke will turn out to be a blend of two. We owe the *new* joke of this kind to Grimaldi.

Grimaldi's special joke was to construct preposterous things. He made a carriage with a cradle for the body, Cheshire cheeses for wheels, and a broomstick for axle. He turned himself into a Hussar by wearing coal scuttles for boots, brass candlesticks for spurs, a white fur for his jacket, and a muff for his head-dress. What gave point to the joke was the way he joined and subjoined these things, the way he looked when he fell into a brown study over his labours, and the way he rushed in triumph whenever a new idea flashed across his face. Harry Tate is the best exponent of this joke to-day, especially in his demonstration of home-made broadcasting.

—Willson Disher, *The Spectator*

Chaplin

OVERTIME and the THREAT TO STATUS of STUDIO WORKERS

Following its survey of the conditions of Laboratory workers, published in the August "World Film News," the Film Council here analyses those of studio technicians.

In comparison with the conditions under which technicians work in the film laboratories those of the studio technicians are characterised above all by their variety and irregularity. The following survey is based on the reports received by the Film Council from technicians employed in 14 studios of all types. Side by side with the large studios working exclusively for a single production enterprise, there are others, both large and small, which are partially or wholly hired out to independent producers. Studios predominantly engaged on expensive "super" films are represented, as well as those mainly producing quota pictures or shorts. The majority of our informants work with camera crews or in cutting rooms, but there are also sound and projection technicians among them.

The variety in the scale of the work done in these studios is reflected in the replies to our first two questions:

(1) Average number of working days spent on a picture, and

(2) Average number of pictures produced per year.

The answers to the first question vary from 10 days to 15 weeks, quota films appear mainly to be completed in two or three weeks production time, while from six to ten weeks is given as the most usual period for "supers."

In the same way the number of pictures completed in a year varies (not counting the studios which have not yet been working for a year) from 20 to 3 : quota productions ranging from 12 to 20, "super" productions from 3 to 10, although in some studios both types are now being made.

Rush Work

With pictures being produced like clockwork in standard periods of two or three weeks it is not surprising that work is carried on in a state of incessant rush, even where it is evenly spread over a year. But conditions are very much worse, when, as appears to be the case in the majority of studios, periods of mad rush alternate with times of slackness and, in many cases, unemployment. That this state of affairs is largely due to incompetent planning is shown by the fact that it is most prevalent in some of the large units producing only a few pictures per year. But it also occurs in the case of studios producing quota quickies on contract. Often a given number of films must be completed by a certain date and work proceeds fairly leisurely until about half or two thirds of the allotted time has passed, when a terrific rush commences to complete the contract.

"Normal" Working Hours and Overtime

Under such conditions the conception of what constitutes a "normal" working day naturally shows considerable elasticity. In fact, overtime during production periods has become so regular a feature, that in the majority of studios it appears not even to be recognised as such. The usual number of hours worked per day on production—not counting exceptional rush conditions—appears to vary between 8 to 14 hours, 9½ to 10 hours being the most usual figure reported. During the slack periods between production regular employees who are retained on the staff usually have to be at the studio for eight hours a day. The reports we have received of maximum periods worked at a stretch read like the accounts of nightmares, rather than of what they in fact are, the frequently recurring conditions of creative labour. We were told of a working week including one continuous stretch of 48 hours and two of 24 hours each, the remaining three working days lasting from 10 a.m. to midnight, and one of three weeks, during which the production staff simply did not go home at all. "We are at the call of the company at all times," writes another technician engaged in the production of magazine films. "70 hours without sleep," reports another; "120 hours a week on a particular film," another. 15 to 24 hours worked at a stretch are sufficiently frequent to appear in the reports we have received from 9 out of 14 studios.

After such statements it is a relief to read of one of the American-controlled quota production units: "Company aims at starting at 9 a.m. and finishing at 6 p.m. and has carried this out more or less regularly during the last three years."

Work on Saturday Afternoons and Sundays

The fact that Sunday work should not be a normal feature of employment appears to be recognised in most British studios, though not in all of them. Most of them work on occasional Sundays, but there is at least one studio in which Sunday work is regular during rush periods and all production periods are rush periods. The producers' respect for the Sabbath does not, however, extend to the free Saturday (or Thursday) afternoon customary even in so sweated a trade as that of the shop assistant. With a few exceptions Saturday afternoon work is universal during periods of production.

Overtime Payment

It is not surprising to find that with such working schedules the duty of overtime payment is, with a few exceptions, repudiated by the industry. The exceptions, however, are noteworthy for in one studio overtime is paid at the ordinary time rate for all work in excess of 54 hours per week, and in another at the same rate for work in excess of 60 hours, or exactly 50 per cent more than the maximum *permitted* working time for film technicians in France.

Viewing "Rushes"

To check the quality of their work it is desirable that film technicians should be able to see its results. No technician interested in his job will want to miss seeing the "rushes" of the day's shooting. But even with a normal working day of 9 or 10 hours his enthusiasm will be somewhat chastened, if to do so he has to sacrifice a proportionate section of his lunch hour or free evening. Yet that is the general rule in British film studies.

(Studio Conditions—continued)

Holidays

Technicians in regular employment as a rule have two weeks' holidays per year with pay, but even here there are exceptions: "nothing ever arranged" and "yes: about 2 weeks in 2 years" write two technicians employed in the same modern superstudio.

Payment During Sickness

In cases of sickness payment of the full salary for a few weeks (2 to 4) and of half the salary for a similar period in addition appears to be the general rule.

General Conditions of Employment

The conditions we have reported are those obtained during the present period of comparative slackness, after the collapse of the film boom. They are as nothing, compared with those previously prevalent in the studios which were most affected by it. It is worth placing on record the achievement of one of those enterprises—now defunct—which at one time succeeded in producing 33 feature films a year on a single floor by working alternate day and night shifts.

Since those halcyon days, however, the enthusiasm for overtime work has received several salutary checks, the most effective of which is due to the fact that for the shooting of films in studios electric light is required.

But electric lamps are handled by electricians, who are organised in a very powerful union which has already secured for them agreements incorporating the payment of overtime at rates corresponding to time and a half and double time: an addition to the wages bill which deprives the carefree practice of overtime of its most alluring feature.

Another changed factor in the situation is the increasing organisation of the film technicians themselves, whose union is at present negotiating for collective agreements providing for improved working conditions in addition to minimum salary rates.

But there has also, temporarily, we hope, been a considerable decline in studio employment. And if in the laboratories we found a powerful threat to the status of the technician in the tendency for mechanisation, a similar danger faces even the more highly paid studio technicians as a result of the increasingly prevalent practice of short-time contract employment. Obviously the transition from regular to free-lance employment without any compensatory improvement of other conditions implies a dangerous lowering of status.

It is not our intention to comment on the facts disclosed by this enquiry. Our interest in studio conditions, as in film finance, is our concern for British production quality. The facts we have reported reveal, we believe, one of the major causes frustrating the development of British creative ability on the screen.

BOOK REVIEWS

Beam Ends, an exuberant tale of mad but quite irresistible youth, recounts an eventful seven-months trip, made by Errol Flynn and three companions in the fifty-year-old yacht *Sirocco*, from Sydney, Australia, to the Gulf of Papua.

How they ever got out of Sydney Harbour, let alone accomplished the perilous voyage to New Guinea, is remarkable, to say the least. Read the author's own description of their seamanship:

> ". . . the one truly remarkable thing about our seamanship was our appalling lack of it. If I took the sextant and 'shot the sun,' my calculation of our position would, as often as not, locate the ship anywhere from the South Pole to the middle of the Sahara Desert. When Trelawny took a sight, we were sometimes more fortunate, and at least had a chance of finding ourselves afloat on an ocean; being a determined fellow, he would never put down his pencil until he did get us on an ocean."

As episode succeeds episode, one is surfboarded along on the crest of the narrative, and it never lags for a moment.

The devil-may-care attitude which characterises Flynn on the screen, and the same unselfconscious charm, leaps from the pages. Often without food and lacking the money to buy any, they charmed it out of an amazingly hetrogeneous collection of people, ranging from barmaids to governors, in a series of hilarious and unscrupulous exploits, though sometimes they earned a few pounds by fishing or ferrying or gambling or on one occasion, dope running.

Such escapades as:

> "We spent a pleasant week at Bundaberg. My hopes of leaving at the end of four days were crushed when Rex fell for the barmaid in the Ocean Front Hotel. There was no alternative but to sit down and hope for his speedy success for there was by now an unwritten but firmly established law aboard the *Sirocco* that all affairs of this sort must be given priority over everything and full opportunity to mature"

explain why a voyage which should have taken seven weeks took seven months.

Perhaps I am over enthusiastic about the book, because I have been running up against too much psychological stuff lately in which all the characters are everlastingly picking over their emotional bits and pieces to see what makes them tick, but *Beam Ends* was like stepping out of a stuffy room into a fresh sea breeze, and the experience is all too rare to miss.

G. FINCHER

BOOKS REVIEWED

Beam Ends

By Errol Flynn (Cassell. 7*s*. 6*d*.).

Film Publicity

By Sydney Box (Lovat Dickson. 4*s*. 6*d*.).

***The Cine-Technician* No. 11**

By Thorold Dickinson and Alan Lawson (Association of Cine Technicians, 6*d*.).

We are all familiar with the little handbooks which tell us how to do "France on Ten Pounds" *Film Publicity*, by Mr. Sydney Box, scenarist of Publicity Films Ltd., is a guide after the same manner for the advertiser who is tinkering with the idea of selling his wares with the help of the screen. The comparison with the guide-book for the travel-bitten hard-up is not intended to imply that Mr. Box is telling the tale to his prospects in regard to the costs of advertising from the screen. His figures are sound enough so far as the type of film he is chiefly dealing with—cinema-shown and road-shown unabashed advertising films—are concerned. But the path of the would-be traveller is made beckoningly easy and the whole thing is a little too deftly surrounded with just that bright air of romance and whimsical jocosity which is the hall-mark of the luring tunes played by our Pied Pipers of the holiday abroad. In fact, describing the book as a "Publicity Film" for film publicity may be hitting a little below the belt but the criticism is not unjustified. If an advertiser wants a film to advertise branded goods after those fashions with which Mr. Box is most familiar, he will no doubt be left with the impression that Mr. Box and Mr. Box's company are just the people to do the job. And why not?

Subject to the limitations of his chosen attitude, Mr. Box's survey of the field is adequate for the inquiring beginner. It leaves the snags untouched, of course, and occasionally it draws forth a loud exclamation mark as when Mr. Box solemnly declares that a well-known firm of chocolate manufacturers "add that cinema distribution is the best method they know of covering the country quickly and efficiently with a brief message."

Dealing with the inhabitants of the publicity film world Mr. Box is a trifle disingenuous. "The hours they work would horrify the average bank clerk or Trade Union official. Their whole existence is bound up in films; they give up their few leisure moments to the study and discussion of other studios' productions; they keep abreast of every new technical development; they are all ambitious to make the perfect picture. . . . The studio may appear like a bad dream when you enter it for the first time but you will find as soon as you have learned the ropes and mastered the language that film men are friendly, knowledgeable and the most entertaining company in the world!"

C.H.D.

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An important summary of conditions in the Soviet film industry forms a special supplement to the Aug.–Sept. number of *The Cine-Technician* No. 11. This is a report made by the delegates appointed by the Association of Cine Technicians to visit Russia for the 1937 May Day Celebrations. The delegates were Thorold Dickinson and Alan Lawson, and they have compiled a report of considerable documentary importance, arranged under such headings as: Sound, studios, distribution, newsreels, laboratories, production routine, etc. It has as introduction a general survey of social conditions in the U.S.S.R.

MEETINGS AND ACQUAINTANCES

IRVING ASHER greets you from behind a desk the length of a cocktail bar. You half expect to see him wearing a white hat and coat and fixing you a highball.

Asher wouldn't mind what he wore, so long as the sleeves could be rolled up. In his six years as production chief at Warner Brothers' Teddington Studios, he has done as much as any man for the prestige and profit of British pictures. Admittedly, his product is mainly of the frivolous variety; but Asher thinks there are enough suet puddings being turned out by the home studios without him slaving over the same hot stove.

If you are one of those who take pleasure in panning British films, stay away from Mr. Asher's door. He's got no time for you. "When a kid makes a typical kid's mistake," says Asher, "what do you say? 'Give him a chance—he's young yet,' that's what you say. And that goes for British pictures. They're still growing, still learning. When we want advice we have to turn to Father, the American Industry. And even Father doesn't know all the answers. Very soon now we'll be telling *him*."

Asher has some interesting things to say about his players. "We believe in keeping a 'stock' company of some thirteen or fourteen people under contract. Of these, perhaps three or four are rated as stars. These are our heavy artillery; each has his own line of attack; stories are fashioned to fit them.

"That leaves us with our supporting players—our mobile troops, ready and able to take any part that may come their way. We encourage our young people to play as many widely different rôles as possible. We avoid 'typing' them as we would avoid the plague. We release them, if they wish, for seasons at neighbourhood theatres, such as the Embassy. If they play gilded youth in one picture, we knock the gilt off them for the next. If they have to eat caviare for a scene this week, we try and fix them up with crusts and a coffee-stall for the week after.

"Only in that way do we consider a player can find his real *métier*. Then and only then is he ready to be groomed for stardom.

" 'Typing ' a player too early in his career is one of the worst sins a studio can commit. Take Myrna Loy—card-indexed by Hollywood in her early days as Exotic Spy Type, Officers For The Use of. She snapped out of it in time—hundreds don't. Chili Bouchier—one of the best bets on our payroll at the present time, is another example. She has built up a second career with us in parts totally different from those in which she made her earlier appearances.

"We believe, too, in keeping an eye open for local talent. Clem Lawrence, tough guy of *Transatlantic Trouble* and now making *Quiet Please*, is a case in point. Clem was engaged as a trainer to the executive staff, the idea being that a daily workout might help preserve their youthful contours. We saw possibilities, tried him in a picture. He is now under contract and making his third film for us. The executives' stomachs are right back where they were, but what's an executive's stomach when there's star material around?"

Asher started in pictures as a prop. boy with Universal. It took him two trips to England before he decided to settle, renting studios at the site where the Warner Brothers lot stands today. In 1934, the old premises were enlarged and Asher began to build up the organisation as it is today. The bulk of those who started with him then, are still there. And it doesn't seem a day too long.

Star-building keeps Asher busy, because as fast as he builds them, the Warner Bros. American set-up ships them over there. Errol Flynn, Ian Hunter, Patric Knowles, Sybil Jason, the late

Paul Graetsch—all graduated from Teddington. Keith Faulkner and a new discovery, James Stephenson—described by Asher as the British Walter Huston—seem to be heading the same way. The local authorities are thinking of putting up a sign on Teddington station—"Change Here for Hollywood."

They take Asher's stars—but they also take his pictures. *The Perfect Crime*, *Mayfair Melody* and *You Live and Learn* are all booked for American presentation.

Asher is working to a 16-picture schedule this year; aims to make 20 in 1938. These will fall into two main classes: (*i*) Melodrama, a sure-fire proposition in the provinces; and (*ii*) Comedies with tried comics such as Max Miller, Claude Hulbert.

When Mr. Jack Warner arrives at the Teddington Studios from Hollywood this month, he'll say the old place has changed. The buildings may be all decked out to resemble the front of a theatre, a night-club or whatever their current pictures in production call for in the way of an outdoor set.

They believe in using all they've got down at Teddington. And Mr. Asher thinks they've got plenty.

Rodney Hobson

EDWARD R. MURROW, lately appointed European director for the Columbia Broadcasting System of America, is already getting to grips with some interesting material. He has already broadcast to America relays from the Salzburg Festival, talks from the fighting zone in the Chinese-Japanese conflict, an actuality broadcast from an Essex inn and an *ad lib* programme from the pier head at Brighton. Is emphatic that the English man in the street is much more articulate than his U.S. counterpart; which surprises us. Periodically he brings English statesmen and men of letters to the microphone to report English life and interpret English policies to the American people. Widely travelled, a brilliant linguist and a keen student of foreign affairs, Murrow brings many essential qualities to his job.

Previously engaged in educational work and an active figure in international student organisations, he later became director of Columbia's Talks Department in the United States before taking up his present post.

At present planning a series of programmes from regions of England and Scotland. An early one will deal with the Welsh coal industry. He has much faith that by using radio to put the common peoples of the world in touch a service can be done to international understanding.

* * *

Familiar to the purlieus of Wardour Street is the determined figure of NORMAN HIGGINS striding on its perpetual quest of unusual programmes for Cambridge's Arts Theatre. Equally familiar to the intelligentsia of the University is the same figure as, two hours later, encased in immaculate evening dress, it takes its place in the foyer of the Arts to do the evening's honours.

Higgins' career as a Cambridge exhibitor was preceded by a spell of service in the R.A.F. For some years he managed the Tivoli and by his skilful choice of programmes made it one of the best-beloved cinemas in the town. His native energy and efficiency combined with an intimate knowledge of changing undergraduate tastes makes him a singularly fortunate acquisition for the Arts.

* * *

DITA PARLO, whose superb acting of the bride in Vigo's *L'Atalante*, will be long remembered by film connoisseurs, has been making an English version of *Mademoiselle Docteur* under Granville's direction at Worton Hall. She played the lead under Pabst in the original French version made in Paris. Her lingual abilities (which include German) have been exploited in earlier films by directors of the calibre of Joe May and Kirsanoff. Hungarian by birth, Dita Parlo will be welcome in the British cinema if only because she is one of the few European movie actresses who have never confused the techniques of stage and screen.

PEOPLE WITH PURPOSES

NEWS NOTES

Following on the great interest shown by educationists in the programme of the Tatler Theatre, London, G.B.I., in co-operation with Mr. Arthur Jarrat, are arranging monthly shows of educational films in twelve leading cities. Each programme, will treat some definite subject and among those chosen so far are *The Nineteenth Century*, *Mountains*, *Aquatic Life*, *Public Services*, and *The Country in Autumn*. Headmasters will be consulted on the choice of programmes and if they prove successful the scheme will be extended.

* * *

The Realist Film Unit have now completed their first three productions. *The League at Work*, directed by Stuart Legg, was made in English and French. Both versions have been shown regularly in the League of Nations Theatre at Geneva, while the French version has also been presented at the Paris Exhibition. *Children's Charter*, directed by Basil Wright, presents in a novel and forceful way the whole problem of the English educational system of to-day. Wilson Harris, Editor of the *Spectator*, is the commentator, and also appears in the film.

Smoke Menace, directed by John Taylor, deals with smoke abatement and shows clearly how the damage done by smoke to both buildings and health has become a social problem of major importance.

Three more productions are now in hand, including one on Shale Oil, which is to be shown at the Empire Exhibition, Glasgow. The film will trace the historical growth of its industry, it will show how this Scottish industry ante-dates later developments in America and the East, and how modern technique in this field originated from it.

Realist Film Unit will shortly be moving to their new headquarters at 34 Soho Square; phone: Gerrard 1958–9.

* * *

The Travel Association Film Unit is now working on the production of *London on Parade*, a film intended to present London to the outside world as a modern and progressive city. Several documentaries are also being prepared for showing in South America.

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A new film entitled *Horse Sense*, made by Dick Bird, has been produced in Canada. It deals with the journey of some Canadians to England, and a cast of natural actors was used. The film was started on the Saskatchewan Prairies and was completed last month in England.

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Scannain Eireann, the Irish Film Company, are now completing two educational films in Gaelic —one of these being in colour. Other films in Gaelic are also in production and educational films from foreign countries will be imported and re-edited in Gaelic for showing in Irish schools.

* * *

Educational and General Services have treatments for four films in hand. Details of these are at present not available.

* * *

The Irish Travel Association Film Unit has in production several more films under J. N. G. Davidson's direction. One of these will show twenty-four hours of life in Ireland.

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Having experimented with the showing of educational films in schools the Middlesex Education Committee have decided to extend this practice. The Middlesex Schools Film Society has been formed so that teachers may exchange views on films shown.

* * *

The Brentford School, Essex, last year showed more than 200 films, and this year hopes to give films an even more important place in their curriculum. Mr. Buckland Smith, the organiser of the scheme, expects to be able to show more than 700 films in the coming year. And he reckons that the average cost per pupil will be less than ½*d*.

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The studio which is being established by the Religious Film Society was opened on September 28th by Mrs. J. Rank.

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The films sponsored by the Workers' Travel Association are now in production. One deals with their hostels and the other, directed by Ralph Bond, concerns a cruise in the Mediterranean.

* * *

Cambridge Film Productions have completed a very excellent descriptive film of the vitamins factor and nutrition (see Film Society News). Geoffrey Innes made it.

* * *

Gas industry goes into distribution in a big way this winter. Among the films to be distributed are two new cookery films by Boulestin; a film on kitchen planning; one on Kensal House; and one on housing; also Basil Wright's important new film on Schools.

* * *

Eight new productions are in hand at the G.P.O. Len Lye is cutting his first screen romance. He shot it straight, in a manner of speaking—a new departure for him. What comes next, Len only knows. Evelyn Spice has just left the unit—bequeathing it her newest film, a sympathetic essay on messenger boys referring especially to vocational guidance. It is to be released in October.

The two major productions are *Road Transport* and *Big Money*, both on the cutting bench. The first discusses vital problems of the road and their evolution—to music by Dr. Ernst Meyer. The second is Harry Watt's characteristically clear version of the story behind the Post Office Estimates, and their position in the national economy.

Three shorts—*The Copper Web*, small-time saga of the underground plunge of the telephone wires; *North of the Border*, or *Problems of a Postman in Scotland; Book Bargain*, or *Why the Directory costs you Nothing*. Finally a robust comedy by Massingham about the wish-fulfilment of a country postman. Those who remember his last film—*And So to Work*—will recognise the close observation and shrewd touch of this essentially cinematic humorist.

* * *

In Somercotes Central School, Alfreton, Derbyshire, older boys are taught the theory of the cinema, and several have already made successful operators. The names of Rotha, Korda, Grierson, Dean, etc., mean much more than occasional flashes on their local cinema screens, and scenario writing is a practical form of English composition.

A 35 mm. projector, found in the "scrap room" of a picture theatre, has been re-conditioned by one of the masters, Mr. H. A. Summers, and some of the boys. It is fitted with a 1,000 watt lamp and an a.c. motor—a re-winder has been made in the Handicraft room. Films are supplied by the Empire Film Library, Austin Motors, C.W.S., Publicity Films, Gasparcolour, Ford Motors, the Dental Board, Educational Films Bureau, etc., and a programme of 86 films has been made out to March, 1938. Performances take place after school, usually lasting for a couple of hours.

The scheme, started and carried on by Mr. Summers, has no financial help from authorities. Boys bring contributions when they can.

* * *

Subjects of sociological interest play an important part in Strand's current programme. With *To-Day We Live* finished and trade-shown, the non-theatrical version, *To-Day and To-Morrow*, dealing with every aspect of social service schemes, is being cut by R. I. Grierson before presentation at a Gala Charity Performance at the Regal, London. Another film of the unemployed is Stanley Hawes's *Here Is the Land*, for the Land Settlement Association, which reaches show-copy stage this month.

Having finished *The Future's in the Air*, Shaw is with London Films at Denham to re-make *The Conquest of the Air* for Korda. After this he will cut his Malayan film *Five Faces*. The other air films, *Air Outpost*, and *Air Pilots*, by Ralph Keene are ready for showing. Other subjects from the Australian Unit's trip to be cut this winter are *Rice Harvest*, *Rosevale Ranch* and *Dancing Island*, while a separate non-theatrical programme is being prepared for Imperial Airways.

A unit under W. Pollard is in Cornwall making a film of its traditions and industries. Two more non-theatricals, *Boats that Save Life*, for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and *The Film of Paint*, for the Lead Industries Development Council are finished, both being directed by Miller Jones and cut by Oliver Cheatle.

The twelve *Animal Kingdom* Zoo and Whipsnade films are all in production under the supervision of Professor Julian Huxley. Six of the series will be ready by the New Year, the remainder by Easter.

When Paul Rotha, by whom all the above films were supervised, left for the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in September, his duties were taken over by Stuart Legg, who has been loaned for a period to Strand Films by Film Centre.

GERALD SANGER, MOVIETONE NEWS

—Hits Back with a Silk Glove!

Glen Norris's wide-open Letter to Gerald Sanger, published in September W.F.N., is replied to below by Gerald Sanger

"We really agree . . ."

DEAR MR. GLEN NORRIS,

In the September *World Film News*, you addressed an open letter to me which shows you as indeed more than just an observant member of the newsreel public. You are a knowledgeable and discreet critic, to whom the names on the screen are more than names; they are personalities of whose functions you are aware. Which makes me guess that you must be an old acquaintance under another name to whom I gave a wide-open interview some weeks ago. (Sorry, Mr. Sanger, my turn to say "you're wrong."—G.N.)

In the face of such immaculate information, it is difficult to decide what attitude I should take. It is proverbial that the better the advice, the more unacceptable it becomes. However, avoiding pique, I assure you that our aims coincide precisely with what you say ought to be our practice.

Twice a week, and fifty-two weeks in the year, we strive to provide a polished, compact, fast moving, varied newsreel, from material which may reach us at any time, and in any form, during the three days' incubation period; not knowing what may happen in the last few hours of "make-up" to upset the calculations of our early forecasts. So many are the factors which complicate our work, that I often blame myself for having introduced, as a further ambitious embarrassment, the multi-voice system which you commend. With one commentator, the work of producing and editing is immensely simplified. He is always on the spot; he has one style; he is a known quantity. With our system, we have committed ourselves to obtaining the most suitable voice for each given subject.

This leads me to suggest that you did us less than justice in your felicitous reference to our opposite number in New York. The multi-voice system started with British Movietonews, from whom Movietonews of New York adopted it and glorified it. We were a few days ahead of our confreres in reducing titles to a few words superimposed over a first scene. We pioneered with a feminine voice, that of Miss Beryl de Querton, the first newsreel commentatrice. I mention these instances, not to disparage Movietonews of New York, but to indicate that we have ourselves participated in evolving the model which you admire, and of which alas! you feel we fall short.

One of the controversies which will always rage in newsreel procedure is that on which you have placed yourself irrevocably on record: namely, which comes first, picture or commentary? The orthodox method (you call it the "old fashioned system") is to write commentaries to previously cut pictures. You differ from this view. You believe in the system of "telling the story in fast moving commentary, and illustrating it (afterwards) with exciting shots." Without blenching, I must admit that in this view you are right. But then, so are we! Only your information is wrong!

Purist practice, as mentioned above, is to cut the picture first, and leave it to the text-writer's ingenuity to accommodate his dramatic periods or his wisecracks to the footage thus fixed by the cutter's thumb and finger. Contrary to your confident assertion, this is the fierce creed (amounting almost to a fetish) of New York's newsreel offices. It speaks volumes for the skill of Mr. Lowell Thomas and his text-writer, Mr. Prosper Burnaelli, that they can turn out such an invariably slick job under such a handicap. But British Movietonews has never committed itself to this policy. On the contrary, with us the text-writer is given the latitude to draft his ideas in definite form first, before the negative is cut.

So you and ourselves really agree, although you don't realise it. I personally agree with you even in your strictures, which amount to this: that we are not perfect according to our model, yet. Fortunately, we are never satisfied with ourselves; and if there are still enormous potentialities before us, as you aver—well, so much the greater incentive.

Yours sincerely,

GERALD SANGER.

DEAR MR. SANGER,

I am overwhelmed by the charming grace of your reply—knocked against the ropes by your silken parry to my well meant but hard hitting lefts. I almost hope that some day I may really be the recipient of one of your wide-open interviews—they must be stimulating! Gladly I hold over my next "Wide-Open Letter"—hand my page to you!

My congratulations on your achievements in leading America to multi-voiced commentaries, superimposed titles, and "commentatrices." As you say, these innovations were adopted in London and New York within such a short time of each other, that an outsider was led to believe that the lead had come from across the Atlantic.

But I must take up your smooth arguments about "commentary-before-picture." I think perhaps the fault is mine, in that I misused the word COMMENTARY. I am not so unpractical as to suggest that the ACTUAL WORDING of every commentary should be written before the picture is even shot. SCRIPT is the term I should have used. I firmly and irrevocably believe that every newsreel story, however slight, however unexpected, should be scripted beforehand—with rough indications of the line of thought of the commentary, the general angle of the picture, the type of sound and music.

You say that in America it is a fetish to cut the picture first, write the commentary after. When Mr. Lowell Thomas was over here at the time of the Coronation, I had the pleasure of an interview with him. He told me of the endless discussions that he and Truman Talley—your opposite number in the U.S.—had had about the Coronation Commentary for America; how they had planned the presentation weeks beforehand. They may not have put a single word on paper, but if it wasn't mental scripting, I'll let you write my page next month as well!

You say that your text-writers DO draft their ideas before the cutting. I reply that the result, as I see it on the screen each week, gives no indication that they do. There's all the vocal padding, all the "what-can-I-say-now" feeling associated with "the old fashioned system." There must be something wrong with your text-writers—or don't your cutters follow the drafts?

I still claim that the last two rounds are mine.

Yours sincerely,

GLEN NORRIS.

NEWSREEL RUSHES

NEWSREEL NOTES BY THE COMMENTATOR

OLDEST NEWSREEL in Britain to-day is Gaumont-British, the modern sound version of the old Gaumont Graphic, started nearly 40 years ago. Second in seniority is Pathé Gazette, of which the silent version began with the reign of George V in 1910. By the side of these two veterans, the other reels are youngsters—the Empire News, silent forerunner of the Universal Talking News, on the screen since 1924—British Movietone, since 1929—Paramount, since 1931. Now the year 1937 must be added to the list of historic newsreel dates—for this month sees the birth of a sixth reel—NATIONAL NEWS.

A SCOTSMAN'S BRAIN CHILD, is this youngest reel; for its appearance marks the realisation of a long-cherished wish of N. (for Norman) Loudon, Chairman of one of Britain's smaller but thoroughly efficient production and distribution companies, Sound City Ltd. Like many another Scot, Norman Loudon has gained a remarkable reputation for a sound business sense. With small, inexpensive, second feature pictures, he has succeeded where most others have failed, in never yet finishing a financial year with a loss. After day-dreaming for several years about the possibility of starting up a newsreel, Norman Loudon's plans finally took practical shape when he found a truly practical editorial brain to help him.

A LIFELONG NEWSREEL TECHNICIAN is how Cecil R. (for nothing) Snape likes best to be described. For thirteen years editor, first of the Empire News, later of the Universal Talking News, he has personally supervised the production of more than 25,000 screenewstories; has worked, eaten, played, slept, always within reach of a telephone. But in the midst of his tearing, bustling life, Snape found time to day-dream too. His secret hope was for more scope to try out his production ideas than was possible within the somewhat restricted policy of Universal. He found, in Norman Loudon, a man with the power to make that hope a reality. So Snape left Universal last July, and National News was conceived. One feature at least, he decided to carry over to his new reel—a single commentator, personally plugged by name. He did not take R. E. Jeffry with him, instead he traded on the publicity value of a classic mistake.

WORLD FAME was thrust upon a comparatively little known B.B.C. commentator, when he committed a microphonic *faux pas* that swept round the world, finally to oust the Little Audrey stories as Public Silly Saying No. 1. Lieut.-Commander T. (for Thomas) Woodroffe is one of the B.B.C.'s latest recruits from the Navy. Without any previous experience of using his voice in public other than barking orders, he discovered he had a natural flair for vocal description; found his way on to the permanent staff of commentators. One of his early jobs was to disguise himself as a mere Tommy, describe the Aldershot Tattoo from the arena. Given most of the naval commentating jobs, he was sent to Spithead for the Coronation Naval Review. Night had fallen—the moment had come for the fireworks—the strain of being back on his old ship with his old messmates was too much for Woodroffe—in a flash of mental weakness, the world heard him say: "The fleet's all lit up—when I say lit up—I mean—with lights." The London announcer in charge of the programme faded him out—Woodroffe was an international figure—another of the B.B.C.'s "bad boys." As commentator for National News it remains to be seen whether he realises fully that there is no connection whatsoever between painting word pictures for an audience of listeners, and keeping up a thread of informed comment for an audience of watchers. Without that realisation, success in his old job, will be no key to success in his new. National News is sufficiently proud of its first commentator to promise to show his picture on the screen in the main title of each issue.

National's Woodroffe . . . "disguised as a Tommy"

BUT THE BACKBONE of the National News staff must be its camera and sound men. For them, it has drawn wisely, from some of the most experienced men of its rival reels. On the cameras will be Eric Owen and J. Humphries from G.B., Jerry Somers and S. Swan from Universal, and S. Bartholomew, who has been free-lancing for Pathé. The first sound truck will be run by Leslie Murray from Movietone—a second truck is already ordered. Re-recording of sound, music, and commentary by F. Ralph of Movietone.

DISTRIBUTION will be through Norman Loudon's own Sound City Distributor's organisation. So far no official announcement regarding any tie-up with one of the major cinema chains, such as Odeon or Union, is announced. As long as no such fixed and steady market is assured—such as is enjoyed by Pathé with the A.B.C. chain, or G.B. with its own chain—most shrewd observers feel that the financial position of National News cannot but be weak. The open market of "free" cinemas—privately owned houses, and small, locally owned chains—is hardly large enough to support a newsreel with a world coverage as claimed by National News.

MOST EXCLUSIVE FEATURES promised for the new reel are as yet announced to be "strictly secret, to prevent our rivals from pinching our ideas." That time-honoured phrase may hide something really startling, or may merely imply a state of unpreparedness, of ideas not yet bearing fruit. A few small plums that have so far fallen from the tree: 1. National News will break away from the rigid custom of an 850 ft. issue, will be printed in three different lengths—a five star, 1,200 ft.—a four star, 800 ft.—a three star, 500 ft. Hiring cost of the three issues will vary in proportion. 2. Make-up of the reel will consist of a smaller number of bigger stories—most short "flash" stories will be eliminated. Each story will be "built up" to show the "news behind the headlines." But no explanation is offered of how the enormous handicap of a new reel, the lack of a library of previously shot negative, is to be overcome. 3. Commentator Woodroffe is to use a fast moving, American style of commentating; is to collaborate in the writing of scripts for stories before they are shot; is to work in close co-operation with the editor and cutters.

THERE IS SOME PROMISE, at any rate, that National News intends to break away from tradition, in a section of the film world where everyone and everything seems to be stuck in a deep, deep rut of dullness. Final judgment must come only after the product has been seen on the screen; but that a young, 100 per cent British reel may show the old hands just where they ought to be, is indeed an occasion for joyous anticipation.

LAST JULY, when Cecil Snape, longtime Editor of Universal Talking News, changed over to National News, his old job was filled by a shuffle round within the Universal organisation. Managing Director Cecil Jeapes, moved into the editorial chair with Brian Saveall as joint editor.

Commentating will continue entirely in the throat of R. E. Jeffrey.

SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE

About the Creeping Paralysis of

FILM CRITICISM

says film critic, Leslie Withers

THE recent banning of *Film Weekly* from trade and Press shows by Columbia Pictures again brings up forcibly the strange position of the film critic in this country and the lack of dignity with which the job is invested as well as the invisibility of authoritative support.

Because a dramatic critic commented adversely on a Cochran production no one has heard of C.B. preventing him from attending, in an official capacity, all of his future shows, yet the film critic is constantly subjected to insults of this kind. And the *Film Weekly* incident proves that London is no less a danger spot for the critic than the Provinces.

I have had some years of experience as a Provincial film critic and know that in many instances it is an uphill fight to be honest yet avoid actual declaration of war by film renters who, ignoring a hundred laudatory reviews of their companies' films, have adopted more than a truculent attitude because of one piece of warranted criticism.

On one occasion a few years ago I reviewed a certain film adversely (my opinion being endorsed later by almost every other critic of standing) and a deputation arrived at my office seeking my resignation. Failing to achieve that object, I was immediately banned from their key cinema for several years. It is not difficult to see who lost most heavily by that action.

It is inconceivable to me that a supposedly adult-minded business should prefer a continuous stream of sickly puff paragraphs to conscientious criticism, yet its high-handed moves demonstrate that it has a great desire to dam the clean stream and turn on only the tap which emits fizz.

The film trade has a perfect right to demand that newspapers should entrust film criticism only to those fully qualified for the job (and we know this is not always done) and also they have the right to object strongly to the sacrificing of a costly production demanding serious consideration on the altar of a few pungent wisecracks (and we know, too, that this is often done). But where the Press should adopt a stand is on the question of the sincerely expressed opinions of a critic who has a full knowledge of his subject.

I can see no hope for the future if the problem is not attacked at once. I say this because there seems strong evidence that, with a few wise-minded exceptions, film companies' one desire is to make personal and commercial war against all who dare to suggest that every film is not an epic. I have been received coolly for days by renters handling films which they knew were bad but hated seeing so in print. Sometimes coolness develops into open war by the withdrawal of advertisements.

It is needless for me to detail here the old arguments concerning the public's resentment against film news obviously inspired by servility and fear and the fact that such resentment rebounds upon the heads of those who bring it about. The cinema has got beyond the stage where the public is satisfied only with news of a star's diet, dress and loves and the synopses of the films in which they appear. Producers like Thalberg and Korda have made movies worthy of consideration by the cream of the world's intelligentsia.

I myself—and with the support of my firm—have endeavoured to subject the films which I have seen to honest scrutiny and I have found that when many of such scrutinies resulted in partial or complete condemnation, film companies are rarely anything but resentful, despite the fact that I may have declared admirable the previous dozen movies they made.

It would be a futile critic who consistently asserted his infallibility, but he is no critic at all who does not resent the growing antagonism of the film industry against this branch of newspaper life. The critic who is sincere and honest is read; therefore he is the film industry's best friend in the long run.

In my opinion the matter will grow to alarming proportions unless action is taken by such bodies as the N.U.J. and the Institute of Journalists. That action, I submit, should be a meeting between qualified representatives of the newspaper and film industries. Bitter things might be said but they would be preferable to the creeping paralysis of fearless film criticism which is now taking place.

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LETTERS

Have Films Advanced?

It is a notable fact that Hollywood has produced more progressive films in the past 25 months than in its entire past 25 years.

A glance at the American film from 1912 on shows a few significant and socially valuable pictures: *Intolerance* by David Wark Griffith comes to mind. Also *The Italian* (Thomas Ince), *Greed* (Eric von Stroheim), *Tol'able David* (Henry King), *Pilgrim* and *Gold Rush* (Chaplin), *The Crowd* (Vidor), and two or three others.

Side by side with these films have come many times the number of anti-labour and pro-war films such as *Americanism versus Bolshevism, Civilisation, New Moon, No Greater Glory, Friends of Mr. Sweeney, Gabriel Over the White House, Golden Harvest, Cavalcade, Pilgrimage*, to name but a few.

Since the war Hollywood has gone through many metamorphoses, chief of which was the coming of sound film and the passing of control into the hands of the bankers and brokers; and together with that, the development of trade unionism in the movie industry.

In recent months there have been practically no prominent anti-labour films on the boards. There have been a number of films glorifying war. We have even had two outstanding if imperfect anti-war films in *Road Back* and *They Gave Him a Gun*. In *Life of Zola*, Warner Brothers have given us a profound and useful political document against reaction.

No one will deny that one of the chief reasons for this change for the better has been the tremendous growth of unionism and anti-fascism in the country, particularly in the movie industry itself. Constant agitation by audience organisations for better films has also been responsible for films like: *Life of Zola, Make Way for Tomorrow, Fury, Informer, These Three, Dead End, Black Legion, Life of Pasteur, Mr. Deeds Goes to Town, Winterset, The Good Earth, They Won't Forget, Captains Courageous, Modern Times*.

Compare these fine films of the past year and a half with the so-called better films of three or four years ago: *The Fountain, House of Rothschild, Sorrel and Son, The Crusades, Clive of India, Life of Vergie Winters, No Greater Glory, Of Human Bondage, Whom Gods Destroy, Little Man What Now? One More River, British Agent, Power and Glory, Heroes for Sale, Mad Game*.

Who says the movies have not advanced!

DAVID PLATT

Tribute to Gershwin

It seems strange that the only mention in *World Film News* of George Gershwin, one of the most amazingly popular contemporary composers, is the reprint of an article by Mr. Spike Hughes, belittling his best loved composition. Mr. Hughes condescendingly remarks that *Rhapsody in Blue* is "full of tunes" and "snippets of melody." It may interest Mr. H. to know that the great majority of musical classics are equally full of "tunes" and "melodies."

LESLIE PARKER

"I Won't be Hectored"

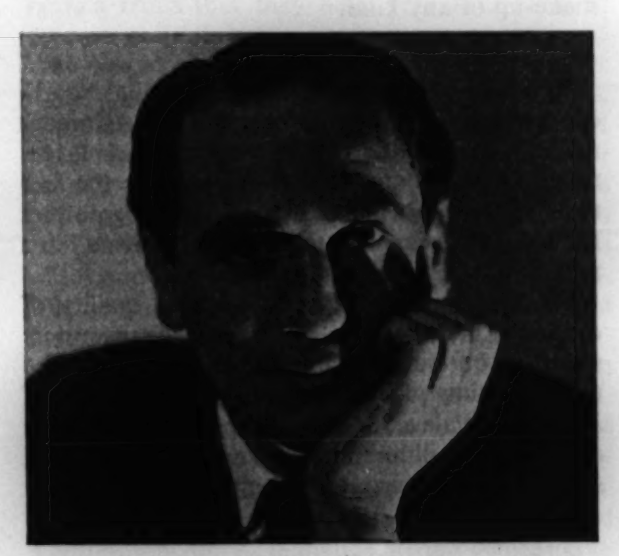
says Sidney Bernstein, replying to Hector McCullie's attack on double-feature programmes

To reply to Mr. Hector McCullie's heavy artillery, I generally prefer the second feature to the first. So do many of my customers. Give them or me the choice of seeing Mr. Tauber's larynx in action or Mr. Durante's proboscis performing tricks of montage, and both they and I plump every time for the latter ornament. We prefer noses to throats.

And then there's "*Romeo and Juliet*." Mr. McCullie's general complaint seems to me that he had to sit through three-quarters of an hour of "shooting up" before he was able to get down to the real, the serious, the vital task before him.

For me the shooting couldn't have started too soon—I only wish they had done it in Hollywood before *Romeo and Juliet* was finished. That's the pity of it nowadays; the shooting always starts too late, especially in studios.

But all this talk of frustration is unreasonable.



Sidney Bernstein

McCullie must know that cinemas are compelled to display the showing times of all films and he knows too that no one need go in before their favourite opera or drama is showing.

At the Bernstein theatres we go further and announce on all our posters and advertising the times at which each picture comes on.

But if I am wrong, can 550,000 weekly Bernstein customers be wrong? They seem to regard the facilities for ambling in midway through a feature as a boon and a blessing.

It is much more convenient for the working man and his wife, for the shop assistant and the city commuter to be able to walk into a continuous performance than to be regimented and tied to a time that suits those whose working hours and meal times are under their own control.

The fact that *Romeo and Juliet* and the later Tauber film were not very successful (and they are the films Mr. McCullie was at such pains to see) proves that his article does not give the representative view. The empty seats he saw at the Tauber performance were not the result of Schnozzle's presence in the programme, or continuous performances, double features, lack of opportunity to "shed the outer world of realities," or a "sense of frustration." No, the explanation is more simple—almost too simple for the sophisticated to appreciate. *The film didn't appeal!*

I myself would like shorter programmes, one feature performances, fixed times, even double prices of admission.

But really! About a month ago many Manchester cinemas changed from twice nightly to continuous programmes. During the last year a hundred or so provincial cinemas have gone from one feature to two. Why these changes? Because the times—and the public—demand them.

Mr. McCullie, wants to "clean up" the cinemas. I'm tired of purges—everywhere. But I don't mind the reformers starting, if they must start, in the studios.

But hasn't a purge started there already? Or is it merely a legal probe?

SIDNEY BERNSTEIN

Better Balanced Programmes

It seems to me that Mr. McCullie has overlooked one point of vital importance. "Away with the second feature!" would seem to be the slogan of many exhibitors. Very well. Away with it, by all means, but, at the same time, bring on the means for disposing of the production output of the studios, many of them British, which will in consequence be superfluous. True, not all of the "Second Feature" material comes from British studios, neither is it true that all of the films put out by British studios are "Second Feature" standard. If, however, the "Second Feature," or supporting feature, is to be suppressed, what is to become of the films that go to provide it?

Again, the abolition of continuous programmes is advocated. This may seem a step in the right direction to some people, but as a cinemagoer I personally avoid theatres where a "set" hour for the show is in force, preferring instead to avail myself of the facilities afforded by so many other theatres, into which I can drop when a convenient opportunity presents itself.

Fortunately, however, there seems to be no lack of excellent programme material, even among the feature class. The trouble seems to lie mainly in the determination to present, with nearly every good film, a supporting feature.

One hears cinemagoers say to one another, "What's on at the Chromeon this week?" and the answer, "Oh, So-and-So's pretty good in Such-and-Such, but there's a lousy What's-a-name picture with it." And so the enquirer tries to find another cinema with a better-balanced programme.

It is no uncommon thing to hear people grumbling that at a certain theatre there are no shorts in addition to the features. The blindness of exhibitors to the public's love of Mickey Mouse and the Silly Symphonies, coupled with the tendency to substitute for them inferior imitations is amazing. Good documentaries, too, are more popular with the public than the average exhibitor seems to know, or care.

W. F. ELLIOT

RADIO

AMERICAN RADIO COMMENTARY

Edited by Thomas Baird

GILBERT Seldes, noted American writer and front rank critic of the drama, radio, movies and music, has been appointed experimental television programme chief to the Columbia system. With this appointment comes the news that that company is establishing a television centre in New York. So far experiments have been on the laboratory level. Soon they are to be public. The mode of operation outlined by Seldes is intended "to make as many experiments as possible in order to make as many errors as possible in advance."

"The entertainment value of the early programmes," says Seldes, "plus the novelty value, ought to attract widespread attention. As the novelty value decreases, the improvement in the programmes themselves should bring television entertainment up to the current level of other matured forms of entertainment."

The new television centre is situated in the Grand Central Terminal Building. This point of vantage will allow distinguished visitors to New York to be brought before the camera with a minimum of delay. Coaxial cables radiating to key pick-up points throughout the city will assure audiences a wide coverage of events.

William S. Paley, Columbia's president, disclosed in testimony before the Federal Communications Commission, that his company had set aside the sum of £400,000 for carrying out these experiments in television.

* * *

The possibility that the television camera may yet surpass the photographic camera as an instrument for pictorial reproduction has been suggested by Dr. P. C. Goldmark, chief engineer in the above experiments. Dr. Goldmark has just concluded a five-week inspection of television laboratories in Britain, France and Germany.

"Of greatest importance to the future of television programmes," Dr. Goldmark said, "is the progress of engineers in stepping up the light sensitivity of the television camera. Developments now under way in England and Germany as well as in America promise a television camera ten times more sensitive to light than any now in use, thus rendering it even more useful for reproduction than the ordinary photographic camera using modern emulsions."

One obvious advantage of this development, Dr. Goldmark pointed out, would be to reduce the intensity of studio illumination to a point where heat and glare would no longer handicap the performers. It would also make possible a greater depth of focus, which would enable performers to move freely about the stage without becoming blurred on the receiving screen. This in turn would greatly extend the pick-up possibilities of the camera in all situations where special lighting would be impractical.

Concurrently with efforts to make the television camera more light-sensitive, Dr. Goldmark observed that scientists are striving to make it reproduce in their original intensities all colours of the spectrum. The presence of this panchromatic quality in modern photographic emulsions has given them a distinct advantage over the photoelectric surface of the cathode ray tube, which has made necessary a laborious, unnatural make-up for television performances. In England, Dr. Goldmark said, the B.B.C. has already put to practical use a television camera which has been rendered panchromatic "to a fair degree." Ordinary stage make-up suffices for actors performing before it. Used for special events out of doors, the camera requires no special make-up of any kind.

* * *

The high cost of television receivers has handicapped the new art as a popular entertainment medium in England, Dr. Goldmark said. Prices range from £60 to £160. Thus, despite the fact that B.B.C. has broadcast visual programmes for almost a year, less than 3,000 receivers have apparently been sold to home users.

Dr. Goldmark pointed to the fine quality of outdoor pick-ups in England. Transmitters mounted on trucks enable the B.B.C. to televise events taking place within a 20-mile radius of Alexandra Palace. Such pick-ups can be made in any daylight illumination, ranging from bright sunlight to dim haze on a foggy day.

* * *

In France, Dr. Goldmark found television in a more experimental stage than in England. Broadcasts on the old 180-line standard have been abandoned, and the French Government is now preparing to transmit 441-line images over the Eiffel Tower transmitter now under construction.

* * *

At the radio exposition, in Berlin, Dr. Goldmark was able to survey Germany's technical advances in television demonstrations by the country's leading manufacturers. Many home receivers shown employed the projection-type cathode ray tube for producing images comparable in size with the home motion picture screen. One manufacturer displayed a screen 8 feet wide. Standing before it, groups of more than a hundred spectators watched images as sharply defined and as steady, though not quite so brilliant, as the ordinary commercial motion picture.

Public interest in the Berlin display was keen, Dr. Goldmark observed, but by order of the German Post Office, which supervises all television activities in the Reich, no prices were listed. Except for one table top model, which might be manufactured to retail at about £200, the cost of receivers was still too high for mass distribution.

We, the People, is a half hour broadcast in which the microphone is turned over to the listeners. The people relate interesting items about themselves or their neighbours in their own fashion. Unusually dramatic stories are dramatised with the individuals taking part as themselves. At least six, and usually more, persons travel to New York weekly to participate. These persons are selected by a committee of listeners from thousands of letters sent in by the radio audience. Among those already heard are college presidents, bootblacks, dance hostesses, clergymen, frontier squatters and Park Avenue socialites.

* * *

The first official foreign radio statement on Japan's policy in the Far Eastern situation was heard in the United States in a talk from Tokyo by Kensuke Horinouche, vice-minister of Foreign Affairs. He spoke on *The Issues in Japan's Clash with China*. Horinouche ranks third in Prince Kenoye's cabinet and is one of Japan's leading statesmen. He spoke in perfect English.

A week later Tadayoshi Hitotsumatsu, a member of the Japanese House of Representatives, spoke to America on *Why Japan and China are in Conflict*. Hitotsumatsu spoke in Japanese with an English translation of his remarks at the end of each paragraph.

Half an hour after Hitotsumatsu, Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, the wife of China's Generalissimo, was to have presented the case for China. Madame Chiang was scheduled to speak from the Chengu short-wave station east of Shanghai, near the strategic Woosung fort. The station was bombed six hours before the broadcast—and Madame Chiang's speech was wired to New York and read there.

News commentators and announcers led by Frank Hedges have been heard in numerous news reports on the situation.

* * *

John L. Lewis and William L. Green, opposing leaders on the U.S. labour battlefront, discussed the labour situation in separate broadcasts last month. Each spoke for half-an-hour. Lewis, who is chairman of the C.I.O. and president of the United Mine Workers of America, stated the case for the C.I.O. and Green, president of the opposing American Federation of Labour, made a plea for the opposite faction.

Unquestionably two of the most powerful personalities in the American labour disturbance, Lewis and Green attracted a nation-wide audience.

* * *

The Columbia Workshop, the series of experimental radio dramas which Irving Reis directs for the Columbia network, ventured abroad for the first time when it broadcast Sunday evening programmes from London and Dublin during

RADIO

Notes of the Month

By George Audit

THE B.B.C. say they are going to run an experimental hour in their programmes this coming winter for drama. They propose to broadcast plays which are likely to explore the uses of sound in broadcasting and particularly those which give the human voice a little more work to do than it is accustomed to receive from the stage play.

Plays already named are "The Ascent of F.6" by W. H. Auden and Isherwood, and "The Fall of the City" which was written for American radio by Archibald McLeish. Both of these plays may be described as highly controversial, which would normally put them outside the B.B.C.'s programme material. Fortunately, Mr. Val Gielgud, who is sponsoring the new feature, has forestalled criticism by announcing that the plays are for the "adventurous listener" and are produced for experimental purposes. The scheme is highly commendable and is a definite advance on the Edwardian smugness we have come to associate with the B.B.C. There is also talk of an historical reconstruction on the lines of Herbert Farjeon's "London Calling, 1600," and a production in collaboration with John Grierson.

Feature programme arrangements for the winter also show promise of something new and progressive for radio. Subjects already announced are Marconi, the P. & O. Centenary, Louis de Rougemont, Cecil Sharp, William Blake, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the British Army at Mons, the Russian Revolution, and wine. Listeners will be asking the reason for this sudden recognition of Soviet Russia (hitherto only mentioned with diplomatic news items) and the British Wine Merchants Association will be opening their eyes at the last programme (see their amusing little book, "Not Claret," for a record of correspondence with the B.B.C. about the ban on advertisements of alcoholic beverages in radio publications).

Whenever I have criticised feature programnes for being scrappy or under-rehearsed or superficial, B.B.C. producers have always replied with perfect truth that they have very little time to prepare and rehearse a programme properly and that the pressure of one programme after another makes it extremely difficult to approach the standard of the documentary film. Weeks of preparation and the expenditure of a hundred pounds or so are all burnt out in one brief hour's entertainment, after which the programme is probably dead, seldom recorded, and thousands of broadcasting hours are still waiting to be filled. To the harassed producer the transmitters seem just insatiable.

Now in my opinion the source of this confusion is organisation in the wrong place. The B.B.C. was organised in its present form by ex-Service officers under the leadership of a former factory manager. A battleship certainly requires central organisation. The co-ordination of its sailing and fighting machinery demands strong central control. Any fighting unit is the same. A factory needs central control right down to the smallest unit in the production process if the finished article is to be of any use. But the B.B.C. is an entirely different problem for organisation. Its finances, programme building and transmissions certainly need central operation but what are you going to do about its programmes?

Radio programmes are as diverse as any human activity can be. Variety, music, talks, drama, features, etc., can only be dealt with by specialists of a special kind. Men who know both their subject and the technique of broadcasting it. It is not generally possible for the Governors and Controllers of the B.B.C. to have more than a vague knowledge of these specialities. Under their control the tendency has been for each subject of broadcasting to become the exclusive interest of respective departments. Thus, the Music Department is one world; Drama is another; O.B.s are another. What has happened is that the Control Board (and particularly the Director General) has relied on contact with departmental heads for its "control." The people who make the programmes are isolated.

But within the departments—especially Drama, Features and Talks—the situation is reversed. Ideas are submitted to Directors, are rejected, mangled or accepted, and returned to the assistants to be carried out. Such is the confusion that assistants spend much of their time wandering round soliciting ideas for some impending production. Departments are too big to generate any common enthusiasm. The whole process admittedly "works" well from the control angle, but the output is often appalling.

I believe film experience has shown that such work is best done by small, independent units. Such production units, each in charge of a senior producer, must be given freedom of movement and enough money to spend as they think fit. They must be encouraged to work outside as much, if not more than, inside the B.B.C. I am sure that within a year half-a-dozen such units would revolutionise the quality of radio production, raise new technical standards and help to give the public something it really wants.

* * *

WHAT is the best hoax of the year? Radiolympia has a claim. Under a press barrage heavy enough to sell kosher food to Hitler, the show was heralded as the latest thing in entertainment and glamour. Under the enormous fairy-light slogan "The World is Yours with Radio" you were invited into a modern Prospero's Isle.

Actually, after paying my one-and-sixpence, I found the usual display of plywood sets, failed to get a ticket for the evening variety, and found that *not one of the sets on show could be heard!* Broadcast music there was, but it all came through the Tanoy amplifiers behind the stands.

Radiolympia is really a trade show. The general public hear nothing new. Dealers who understand a chassis and can judge by the appearance of a set are able to make comparisons and to meet their suppliers in comfortable surroundings. At one end of the hall is the Exhibitors' Club, closed to the public. Here, around a garden with fountains playing, are fifty offices laid out like a country club, where dealers and foreign buyers are entertained and orders given. I was told that business has been very brisk this year. Many firms sold their entire stock and got enough advance orders to last them until the next show.

Anybody who wants to hear what radio reproduction can do would be well advised to try the South Kensington Museum for preference. Here is a receiver that makes the noise of Radiolympia sound like a cheap tin trumpet. It gives straight reproduction from about 25 to 12,000 frequencies, which means to say that when you hear an orchestra you hear everything from the scraping of the double-bass strings to the wind in the flute. I am not saying that commercial sets are no use: most of them are remarkably good value to-day.

I am simply wondering why the public were invited to Olympia.

American Radio (contd.)

September. The programmes were broadcast by short wave from this side of the Atlantic and were not included in any British programmes.

The first production was *Death of a Queen*, an adaptation of Hilaire Belloc's *Marie Antoinette*, which was transmitted to the United States from the B.B.C. studios on Sunday, 12th September, at midnight British time. Val Gielgud, B.B.C. drama chief, was guest director.

* * *

A brilliant roster of world famous artists has again been mobilised for the 1937–1938 season of the *Ford Sunday Evening Hour*. Jose Iturbi will conduct for the first eight weeks and will be followed by Eugene Ormandy. The next director will be Alexander Smallens, who is followed by Fritz Reiner. Iturbi and Ormandy then return for two concerts each. The concluding five weeks will be under the direction of a conductor still to be announced.

The list of guest artists includes Amparo Iturbi, Richard Crookes, Kirsten Flagstad, Lauritz Melchior, Lotte Lehmann, Heifetz, Gladys Swarthout, Lawrence Tibbett, Nino Martini, Menuhin, Elizabeth Rethberg, Nelson Eddy, Lily Pons, and John Charles Thomas. The soloists for five concerts are still to be announced.

FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppet in Gaspar-colour).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal.

ABERGELE: Cinema	Oct. 28, 3 days
BIGGAR: Cinema	Oct. 28, 1 day
BIRMINGHAM: Maypole, Alcester	Oct. 14, 3 days
Kingsway, Kingsheath	Oct. 4, 6 days
CRIEFF: Cinema	Oct. 7, 3 days
EASINGWOLD: Cinema	Oct. 14, 3 days
HASLAND: Cinema	Oct. 21, 3 days
HOYLAND: Princess	Oct. 7, 3 days
HULL: West Park Cinema	Oct. 18, 3 days
WHITTINGTON MOOR: Lyceum	Oct. 4, 3 days

And So to Work (Comedy of the early morning).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Richard Massingham

BRAMHALL: Tudor	Oct. 4, 3 days
GRANTHAM: Picture House	Oct. 4, 3 days
OXFORD: Scala	Oct. 7, 3 days

Cable Ship (The G.P.O. Cable Ships at work in the Channel).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit
DIRECTION: Stuart Legg

BARMOUTH: White Cinema	Oct. 28, 3 days

Coal Face (Poetic treatment of coal mining).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit.
SOUND PRODUCTION: Alberto Cavalcanti

ROMILEY: Savoy	Oct. 9, 1 day

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw

ARDWICK: Coliseum	Oct. 4, 6 days
BLACKPOOL: King Edward	Oct. 7, 3 days
Tivoli	Oct. 7, 3 days
BROUGHTON: Picturedrome	Oct. 18, 6 days
BURNTISLAND: Cinema House	Oct. 11, 2 days
BUXTON: Spa	Oct. 11, 6 days
CHURCH: Queen's	Oct. 28, 3 days
EASINGWOLD: Cinema	Oct. 28, 3 days
EYEMOUTH: Picture House	Oct. 8, 2 days
GOLCAR: Alhambra	Oct. 4, 3 days
HULL: Cleveland	Oct. 11, 3 days
KIRKBY STEPHEN: Cinema	Oct. 11, 3 days
LONDON: Sphere	Oct. 11, 3 days
MACCLESFIELD: Cinema	Oct. 21, 3 days
NORTHAMPTON: Ritz	Oct. 11, 3 days

Dances of Silesia (Folk dancing in national costumes).
DISTRIBUTION: Cinema Contact

LONDON: Tatler	Oct. 25, 7 days

Enough to Eat? (Investigation into mal-nutrition).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Gas, Light & Coke Co.
DIRECTION: Edgar Anstey

EDINBURGH: Monseigneur	Oct. 18, 3 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street	Oct. 14, 3 days
NOTTINGHAM: News House	Oct. 21, 3 days

Firefighters (Documentary of the London Fire Brigade).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Peter Colin

NEWTON: Regent	Oct. 11, 3 days

Forbidden Frontier (Political situation between Poland and Lithuania).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: World Window Productions
SUPERVISION: Sir Philip Gibbs

BIRKENHEAD: Rialto, Bebington	Oct. 25, 3 days
CHESTER: Music Hall	Oct. 14, 3 days
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur	Oct. 25, 3 days
IPSWICH: Picture House	Oct. 18, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Bedford	Oct. 21, 3 days
LONDON: Tatler, Charing Cross Rd.	Oct. 25, 7 days
PORTSMOUTH: Victoria	Oct. 14, 3 days
WEST KIRBY: Tudor	Oct. 4, 3 days

Granton Trawler (Documentary of deep sea fishing).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: G.P.O. Film Unit
DIRECTION: John Grierson

ABERGELE: Cinema	Oct. 21, 3 days

EDUCATIONAL FILM PROGRAMMES
at the Tatler Theatre,
Charing Cross Road.
Saturday mornings, 12 noon to 1 o'clock.
Oct. 2nd. **The Ninteenth Century.**
Oct. 9th. **The Country in Autumn.**
Oct. 16th. **Mountains.**
Oct. 23rd. **Aquatic Life.**
Oct. 30th, at 11 30 a.m.
Special French Programme
Merlusse
La Gare
Full details from the Manager, Tatler Theatre, Charing Cross Road, W.C.1.

Heads and Tails (Greyhound racing).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning

CHELSEA: Classic	Oct. 28, 3 days
CIRENCESTER: Picture House	Oct. 14, 3 days
DARLINGTON: Alhambra	Oct. 18, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Empress	Oct. 21, 3 days
Plaza	Oct. 11, 3 days
MAIDSTONE: Palace	Oct. 1, 3 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Princess	Oct. 4, 6 days
SIDCUP: Regal	Oct. 4, 6 days

Hollywood To-day (Behind the scenes in Film City).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Rupert Grayson

ALDERSHOT: Alexandra	Oct. 17, 1 day
BINGLEY: Hippodrome	Oct. 25, 3 days
CREWE: Odeon	Oct. 11, 6 days
LANCASTER: Odeon	Oct. 11, 6 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street	Oct. 18, 3 days
Grand, Finchley	Oct. 4, 6 days
NEWPORT: Odeon	Oct. 7, 3 days
NEWTON: Regent	Oct. 14, 3 days
PORTSMOUTH: Victoria	Oct. 3, 4 days
SHEFFIELD: Crookes Picture Palace	Oct. 25, 3 days
WELSHPOOL: Clive	Oct. 11, 3 days

Islands of the Bounty (Islands associated with the famous mutiny).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

BRADFORD: Greengates, Cinema	Oct. 7, 3 days
CRIEFF: Cinema	Oct. 7, 3 days
EASINGWOLD: Cinema	Oct. 14, 3 days
MIDDLETON: Lyric	Oct. 29, 2 days
NORTHALLERTON: Central	Oct. 21, 3 days
QUEENSBURY: Victoria	Oct. 28, 3 days
ROCHDALE: Ceylon	Oct. 7, 3 days
Coliseum	Oct. 4, 3 days
SEGHILL: Welfare Hall	Oct. 14, 2 days
WEST HARTLEPOOL: Regal	Oct. 4, 6 days
WREXHAM: Odeon	Oct. 4, 6 days

Joie de Vivre (Cartoon).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
PRODUCTION: Gross and Hoppin

BOURNEMOUTH: Premier News Theatre	Oct. 25, 6 days
LEEDS: Armley Rink	Oct. 7, 3 days
MILE END: Classic	Oct. 14, 3 days
NEWCASTLE: Olympia	Oct. 1, 3 days
SOUTHFIELDS: Central Hall	Oct. 16, 1 day
SWANSCOMBE: Jubilee	Oct. 21, 3 days

Key to Scotland (Documentary of Edinburgh).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Marion Grierson

GRANTHAM: Empire	Oct. 4, 3 days

Men Against the Sea (Documentary of North Sea trawling).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Vernon Sewell

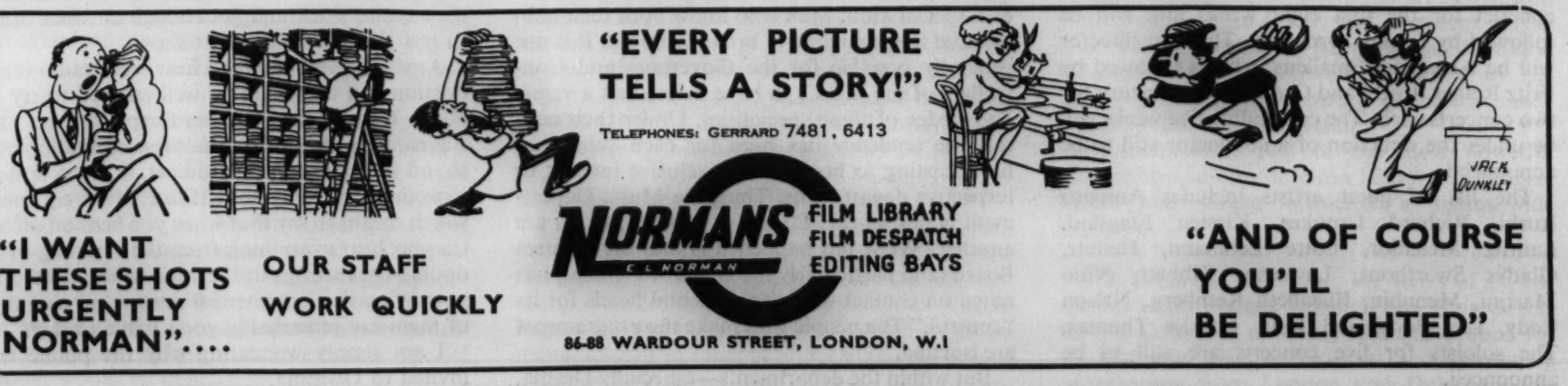
CARDIFF: Odeon	Oct. 4, 6 days
POYNTON: Cinema	Oct. 11, 3 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBIUTON: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright, Harry Watt

ABERGELE: Cinema	Oct. 11, 3 days
BIRMINGHAM: Kingsway, Kings Hth.	Oct. 18, 3 days
COPPULL: Electric	Oct. 18, 3 days
FARNSWORTH: Empire	Oct. 20, 4 days
HALIFAX: Roxy	Oct. 18, 3 days
WHALLEY: Co-op. Cinema	Oct. 11, 3 days

Nomad in the North (Scenic film of Norway).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION & DIRECTION: C. E. Hodges

DORCHESTER: Palace	Oct. 11, 6 days
FALKIRK: Pavilion	Oct. 25, 6 days
LANCASTER: Grand	Oct. 25, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Corona	Oct. 11, 6 days
Magnet	Oct. 21, 3 days
LYDNEY: Picture House	Oct. 4, 3 days
NEWPORT: Odeon	Oct. 25, 3 days
SALTAIRE: Picture House	Oct. 21, 3 days
WITHINGTON: Scala	Oct. 7, 3 days



Shorts (contd.)

Out to Play (London's children in street and park).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION: Harold Lowenstein

BOURNEMOUTH: Premier News Theatre	Oct. 18, 6 days
ILKLEY: New Theatre	Oct. 18, 3 days
MAIDSTONE: Palace	Oct. 3, 6 days
MILE END: Classic	Oct. 28, 3 days
SWANSCOMBE: Jubilee	Oct. 14, 3 days
WINDSOR: Empire	Oct. 7, 3 days

Overland Express (German travelogue).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: C. E. Hodges Productions

ALDERSHOT: Alexandra	Oct. 3, 1 day
LONDON: World News, Praed St.	Oct. 7, 3 days
NOTTINGHAM: News House	Oct. 18, 3 days
SWINDON: Palace	Oct. 28, 3 days

Plane Sailing (The ins and outs of gliding).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Bosworth Goldman

FARNHAM: County	Oct. 3, 1 day
HANLEY: Regent	Oct. 4, 6 days
HOLLOWAY: Empire	Oct. 4, 7 days
HULL: Carlton	Oct. 14, 3 days
LANCASTER: Odeon	Oct. 18, 6 days
LEEDS: Assembly Rooms	Oct. 25, 6 days
Majestic	Oct. 11, 6 days
LONDON: Eros News Th., Piccadilly	Oct. 14, 3 days
REDDITCH: Gaumont Palace	Oct. 21, 3 days
SOUTHWOLD: Cinema	Oct. 11, 3 days
WAKEFIELD: Carlton	Oct. 14, 3 days

Secrets of the Stars (Spotlight on British stages and studios).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Argyle British Productions Ltd.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE: Majestic	Oct. 4, 6 days
BIRKENHEAD: Super	Oct. 11, 3 days
CHELTENHAM: Gaumont Palace	Oct. 11, 6 days
DARLINGTON: Alhambra	Oct. 4, 3 days
GUERNSEY: Lyric	Oct. 25, 6 days
HAMILTON: La Scala	Oct. 7, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Corona	Oct. 4, 6 days
Empress	Oct. 4, 6 days
Gaumont Palace	Oct. 7, 3 days
Gaumont, Princes Park	Oct. 14, 3 days
Tatler	Oct. 14, 3 days
LEIGH: Palace	Oct. 4, 6 days
MORECAMBE: Tower	Oct. 7, 3 days
NEW BRIGHTON: Trocadero	Oct. 28, 3 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Princes	Oct. 18, 6 days
PRESTON: New Victoria	Oct. 25, 6 days
SWINDON: Regent	Oct. 11, 6 days

Snow Water (Water power in the Swiss mountains).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: H. Dreyer

BIRKENHEAD: Rialto, Bebington	Oct. 28, 3 days
CREWE: Odeon	Oct. 18, 6 days
GOOLE: Cinema Palace	Oct. 25, 3 days
HULL: National	Oct. 14, 3 days
Playhouse	Oct. 21, 3 days
LONDON: Electric Palace, Highgate	Oct. 21, 3 days
MANCHESTER: Tatler	Oct. 11, 6 days
NEWCASTLE ON TYNE:	
Majestic, Benwell	Oct. 7, 3 days
NEWPORT: Odeon	Oct. 4, 3 days
PUDSEY: Picture House	Oct. 14, 3 days
SOWERBY BRIDGE: Electric	Oct. 21, 3 days
WANSTEAD: Kinema	Oct. 21, 3 days
WITHINGTON: Scala	Oct. 11, 3 days

Spring Comes to Town (About Hyde Park).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION & PHOTOGRAPHY: M. L. Nathan

ILKLEY: New	Oct. 21, 3 days
MILE END: Classic	Oct. 10, 4 days
SWANSCOMBE: Jubilee	Oct. 7, 3 days
WINDSOR: Playhouse	Oct. 1, 3 days

Statue Parade (Historical treatment of London statues).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: Paul Burnford and Ralph Keene

MANCHESTER: Tatler	Oct. 4, 6 days

Strange Adventures (About Africa).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning

ALDERSHOT: Alexandra	Oct. 1, 3 days
BRIDGETON: Olympia	Oct. 18, 6 days
CHICHESTER: Exchange	Oct. 4, 9 days
CIRENCESTER: Picture House	Oct. 7, 3 days
CLYDEBANK: Bank	Oct. 7, 3 days
DUNDEE: Plaza	Oct. 11, 6 days
Palace	Oct. 11, 6 days
GUERNSEY: Lyric	Oct. 7, 3 days
GLASGOW: Kings	Oct. 7, 3 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	Oct. 14, 3 days
HOUNSLOW: Empire	Oct. 11, 6 days
HULL: Rex	Oct. 1, 3 days
KINGS LYNN: Majestic	Oct. 1, 3 days
LEATHERHEAD: Picture House	Oct. 11, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Corona	Oct. 21, 3 days
Bedford	Oct. 14, 3 days
Gaumont Palace	Oct. 14, 3 days
MONTROSE: Kings	Oct. 14, 3 days
PAISLEY: Regal	Oct. 4, 6 days
REDDITCH: Gaumont Palace	Oct. 11, 3 days
ST. ANDREWS: Picture House	Oct. 21, 3 days
STIRLING: Regal	Oct. 28, 3 days
UXBRIDGE: Regal	Oct. 25, 6 days
WIMBLEDON: Regal	Oct. 25, 6 days

They Shall Not Pass (Documentary of the Civil War in Spain, with English commentary).
DISTRIBUTION: International Sound Films
PRODUCTION: Ministry of Public Instruction in Madrid

NEWBRIDGE: Workmen's Hall	Oct. 4, 3 days
TREDEGAR: Workmen's Hall	Oct. 21, 3 days

This Other Eden (A trip down the river Eden, in Westmorland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph

BIRKENHEAD: Super	Oct. 4, 6 days
BUXTON: Opera House	Oct. 18, 6 days
DARLINGTON: Alhambra	Oct. 7, 3 days
EGREMONT: Gaumont Palace	Oct. 25, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont, Princes Park	Oct. 4, 6 days
Plaza	Oct. 4, 6 days
Corona	Oct. 11, 6 days
Tatler	Oct. 14, 3 days
Bedford	Oct. 28, 3 days
Casino	Oct. 28, 3 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Princes	Oct. 25, 6 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinenews	Oct. 14, 3 days

To-day We Live (The depressed areas of Wales).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: Ralph Bond and R. I. Grierson

MANCHESTER: Tatler	Oct. 25, 6 days

Top Dogs (Greyhound racing).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: A. Moncrieff Davidson

LONDON: Tatler	Oct. 11, 7 days

Under the Water (Unusual submarine photography).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION: Marcel de Hubsch

BASINGSTOKE: Plaza	Oct. 17, 4 days
CROSBY: Regent	Oct. 14, 3 days
LEEDS: Armley Palace	Oct. 11, 3 days
LONDON: Classic, Chelsea	Oct. 21, 3 days
SUTTON-ON-SEA: Savoy	Oct. 14, 3 days
WINDSOR: Empire	Oct. 24, 4 days

Wheel and Woe (The evolution of the motor car).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Liberty
DIRECTION: W. G. Duncalf

BIRKENHEAD: Super	Oct. 18, 6 days
EDINBURGH: New Victoria	Oct. 11, 6 days
Picture House	Oct. 11, 6 days
EGREMONT: Gaumont Palace	Oct. 18, 6 days
HARROGATE: Scala	Oct. 4, 6 days
JERSEY: Opera House	Oct. 14, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Tatler	Oct. 7, 3 days
Gaumont Palace	Oct. 25, 6 days
Empress	Oct. 25, 6 days
Gaumont, Princes Park	Oct. 25, 3 days
MONMOUTH: Picture House	Oct. 11, 3 days
MORECAMBE: Tower	Oct. 10, 4 days
PORTSMOUTH: Regent	Oct. 3, 7 days
SOUTHPORT: Palladium	Oct. 3, 1 day
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinenews	Oct. 17, 4 days

Foreign Films

The Crime of Monsieur Lange (French)
DIRECTION: Jean Renoir
STARRING: Jules Berry
René Lefèvre
Slorelle
LONDON: Curzon — Following *The Pearls of the Crown*

L'Equipage (French)
PRODUCTION: Pathé
DIRECTION: Anatole Litvak
STARRING: Jean Murat
Annabella
LONDON: Studio One — Oct. 1, indefinitely

The Pearls of the Crown (French)
DIRECTION: Sacha Guitry
STARRING: Sacha Guitry
Jacqueline Mogan
LONDON: Curzon — Oct. 1, indefinitely

Le Roman d'un Tricheur (French)
PRODUCTION: Cineas
DIRECTOR & STAR: Sacha Guitry
LONDON: Academy — Oct. 1, indefinitely

Savoy Hotel 217 (German)
PRODUCTION: Ufa
DIRECTION: Gustav Ucicky
STARRING: Hans Albers
LONDON: Forum — Oct. 3, 7 days

Squadrone Bianco (Italian)
PRODUCTION: Roma Films
DIRECTION: Augusto Genina
LONDON: Academy — Following *Le Roman d'un Tricheur*

La Tendre Ennemi (Dutch)
DIRECTION: Max Ophuls
STARRING: Catherine Fonteney
Georges Vitray
Jacqueline Daix
LONDON: Studio One — Following *L'Equipage*

DOCUMENTARY PRODUCERS

On this page you find listed 32 shorts. It is interesting to note that out of these recordings

6 are Foreign
8 are British
18 are Imperial

which, analysed, shows all other British Studios put together recorded 8, Imperial Sound Studios alone recorded 18.
Month by month this is our usual average. Imperial Sound Studios are the only recording studios exclusively devoted to the interests of the Documentary Film Producer, and the total number of recordings to date is 950 separate films.

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WORLD FILM NEWS

AMATEUR AND TECHNICAL SECTION

What About the Crew's Cruise?

Hints on the Holiday Cruise Competition Film

by

Andrew Buchanan

It is extremely easy to film a holiday cruise, but extremely difficult to film it properly. I have seen a great number of productions, amateur and professional, devoted to holidays afloat, but, with one or two exceptions, they were superficial, lacking in continuity, and conventional. Now, I have always advocated that a film director should endeavour to find out why people do the things they do, and having discovered the reasons, should reveal them, thereby creating a logical basis upon which to construct his picture. Bearing this principle in mind, one immediately realises that a cruising holiday appeals to some people more than others. Sailors and fishermen would be unlikely to choose a cruise, for they see too much of the sea, and would prefer to relax as far inland as possible. On the other hand, it is the people in cities, and far away from the coast, who yearn for distant parts and holidays afloat.

Why not begin, therefore, with one or two people sitting, say, at a window, through which can be seen endless roofs, chimneys, factories and walls. They are studying booklets about cruises, which the camera also scrutinises in close-ups. Alluring pictures of foreign parts fill the screen—palm encircled bays, eastern bazaars, world famous ruins, deserts, linked together with attractive pictures of the great liners which make these places accessible. The faces of the characters gaze longingly at the illustrations, and then stare at the panorama of roofs, which might well be followed by other glimpses of streets, endless rows of houses, and general city life, interspersed with close-ups of contrasting shots of picturesque life abroad.

Is the sun really shining beyond the horizon? Can there be tropical heat anywhere whilst the skies are grey here? That is the reasoning to plant, which creates the urge to set out on a voyage of discovery. One of the booklets is given more concentration than the others, and a finger points to the vessel in the list of sailings, which is decided upon. This shot might merge into another showing hands opening an envelope from which fall bundles of labels and papers.

A section of a suit-case follows, and a label is smacked on to it, which states the name of the liner. Such a shot can cut directly to the name of the liner on the side of the vessel, thus transporting the action to the dockside. Passengers are embarking, and the last of the cargo is being hoisted on board.

Many cruise films begin at sea, but I suggest they ought to begin at the beginning. Hence the docks, and several shots to be taken from the liner looking down at the activities of porters and passengers. The funnel siren shrieks. The liner slowly draws away—the journey has begun.

Now you will have noticed that in films presenting a train journey, or a sea trip, jumps in action are easily covered by shots of the countryside seen through carriage windows, or of the sea swirling past the bow of the boat. Such shots are invaluable, providing they are not introduced too frequently. I mention the point at this stage, because I am about to suggest that the sea, as seen from the stern, sides, and front of the vessel as she travels along, should be shot.

However, such inserts should not permit the director to grow careless about his continuity, so that he shoots anything at any time, knowing he can cover himself with the sea shots. They must be introduced with extreme care. Similarly, the controls on the bridge should be shot in close-ups, at all positions, with the hand of the officer altering the position of the levers. These will be vital when assembling is carried out. Therefore, we have planned to open with a city impression, the decision on a particular cruise, the arrival of labels—dockside scenes, and the departure. We have also agreed to shoot covering sea and bridge shots.

Now activities on board command our attention, and these should certainly not be confined to deck games. On board a liner people seek health, rest, and romance. A survey of the passengers will, therefore, be interesting, especially if the camera is invisible. The director must endeavour to establish various characters who will play their little parts throughout the picture. The very large gentleman wrapped in rugs and sleep, should be shot in varying angles, so that he can be intercut through the film, each glimpse of him, always asleep, introducing a humorous note. The sallow spinster always on the verge of sea sickness, despite placid seas and sunshine. The charming girl who becomes aware of the presence of an interested young man. Close-ups of them casting coy glances at each other. Then, a little later in the film, they are seen sitting together primly. Later, a little less primly. Later still, their arms are entwined, and, very late indeed, their figures silhouetted in a long embrace.

These cameos, cut into the deck games, swirling sea, and shots of the less prominent passengers walking, reading, and eating, will make the film less impersonal.

The production will, of course, be punctuated by the arrival at the various ports of call, and brief camera tours of the unusual scenery. These depend upon the director, time, and general conditions, but they must not be confused with the basis of the film, which is the liner itself—the star of the production.

And that brings us to the final, and most important point of all—the dependence of the cruising holidaymakers on the crew. Night and day men are on duty—the bridge is never left, though rarely thought about by the passengers—the cooks are always busy—and the stokers, firemen, engineers, in the bowels of the boat: what about them, and the great engines which they feed and nurse every minute of the voyage?

Ships engines are a problem to the cameraman, for usually they are in semi-darkness and cannot be lit. Sometimes they are surrounded by sufficient light for shooting, but whether this is so or not, they must be taken, and as an alternative, a scale model that works, in the Science Museum, will have to be shot, whether or not it is of the type in the particular ship in the film, for the engines are vitally important when assembling, and if a model should be resorted to, it can be filmed in such a way that, firstly, it does not look like a model, and secondly, as only the merest flashes are necessary they can be shot so that only gleaming, rhythmic movements are visible. But whichever way the engines are filmed, they should be regularly intercut with the controls on the bridge, the sea flowing past the vessel, and, of course, the cameos of the passengers.

This approach affords a contrast between the cruise of the holidaymakers and the crew's cruise, and brings the human element to life in what otherwise might become a vague impersonal film on any boat, anywhere.

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FILM LIBRARY

The following films connected with the cocoa and chocolate industry may be borrowed free of charge by schools, clubs and societies, etc.

35 mm S.O.F. (flam or non-flam)

"The Night Watchman's Story" 6,500 ft. (73 mins.). The cultivation and harvesting of cocoa beans on the Gold Coast; the making of cocoa and chocolate at Bournville.

"Country Fare" 1,700 ft. (19 mins.). A documentary film on some aspects of agriculture, such as the production of eggs, milk and barley to meet the growing demand for foods of this kind.

"Workaday" 3,500 ft. (39 mins.). The workings of a modern food factory and the provisions made at Bournville for the recreation of employees.

"The Gold Coast" 1,800 ft. (20 mins.). Native life and industries on the Gold Coast of British West Africa.

"Fascinating Facts" 750 ft. (8 mins.). A "believe-it-not" film of facts and statistics about the Factory in a Garden.

16 mm S.O.F. (S.M.P.E.)

"The Night Watchman's Story" 4 reels (45 mins.). A shortened version of the 35 mm. film described above.

"Workaday" 3 reels (30 mins.) see description above.

"The Gold Coast" 2 reels (20 mins.) see description above.

"Fascinating Facts" 1 reel (9 mins.) see description above.

16 mm SILENT

"The Night Watchman's Story" 4 reels (45 mins.).

"Country Fare" 2 reels (20 mins.).

"Workaday" 3 reels (30 mins.) (in preparation).

"The Cocoa Bean" 1 reel (9 mins.).

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FILM FEDERATION RE-BORN

by J. S. Fairfax-Jones

WHEN, after the successful launching of the first film society in London in 1925, the movement began to take root in the provinces, it was soon realised that a Federal Organisation was needed. By 1932 film societies had been established or were in the course of formation at Billingham, Birmingham, Cambridge, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Ipswich, Liecester, Manchester, Oxford, and Southampton.

Those engaged in the formation of the earliest provincial film societies naturally turned to the parent society in London for information and advice. One of the objects of the London Society was to encourage and assist the formation of film societies in other parts of the country. To Miss Harvey, the then secretary of the London Society, many secretaries of the first provincial societies, myself among them, owe the successful inauguration and continuance of their societies.

But it became evident that the sheer labour of advising nearly a dozen societies, and in many cases booking their programmes for them, was too great a strain on the resources of the London Society—in terms of time at any rate. Accordingly, in the summer of 1932, a conference at which the societies then formed were represented, was held at Welwyn. From this conference emerged "The Federation of British Film Societies" with the following objects:

> "To collect information for mutual assistance and for the advice of new film societies; to organise representation to authority of the needs of film societies, and to organise the collective booking of films."

For some inexplicable reason, the Federation as so constituted was never a great success. Among the reasons which might perhaps be assigned to this were the independence of some of the older and more experienced societies, the varying needs of the societies, the difficulty of welding the essentially scattered nature of the membership into a cohesive and unanimous whole, and the resignation of Miss Harvey from the secretaryship.

The absurdity of the position became so patent to everybody that in April, 1936, a further conference was held at Leicester and was attended by some 40 delegates. The conference was purely for discussion and it proved to be extremely valuable and enlightening. It was, however, in effect a fiasco, for, on the second day, after many of the delegates had left to attend the London Society's performance, the remaining delegates passed a number of resolutions with apparent intent to bind the Federation as a whole.

At this point the Scottish societies broke away from the Federation and have remained independent ever since.

The Interim Executive Committee set out to draw up a constitution which was adopted at a meeting held in June, 1937. And so the new British Federation of Film Societies with Miss Barbara Frey as secretary came into being.

So, out of all this past turmoil and uncertainty has emerged a new, a practical and a voluntarily constituted Federation. Long may it flourish!

"FILM MAKING from SCRIPT to SCREEN"

reviewed for Amateurs by Evelyn Spice

HERE at long last is a book* for amateur film makers, which goes beyond technical details, how to light sets, etc., and strikes at the basic problem which confronts all film makers to-day, namely, along what lines should he make his film, what is his subject to be? Is he to make fiction films, or go into the documentary field? How can he help the film to find its true self, to do to the best of its powers all those things which no other medium can tackle?

The amateur director, says Mr. Buchanan, is independent. He is not tied by box-office requirements. He does not need to content himself with being only a film manufacturer, making films along cut and dried lines, in imitation of old stage practices, or fiction successes.

He stresses the need to make films "on paper before tackling actual production, and it is upon paper that the future will be gradually formulated, regardless of one's status in professional or amateur cricles. . . . let us first find the formula and the future will look after itself, rather than talk of Progress, as we do, with the formula undiscovered."

Mr. Buchanan goes farther. He not only suggests the need for a plan, or formula, but presents a starting off point. He urges amateurs to:

> ". . . . follow in the wake of the progressive documentalists, realising their limitations from a fictional point of view, and endow their principles with human drama and comedy. Frame the story you are longing to produce in realistic settings, and prepare to meet the criticism of those who can think of no way in which to produce pictures save within a studio.
>
> "When the existing gulf between documentary and fictional has been fully realised, and bridged by the plans of the imaginative director, the result, the fictional-documentary film, will achieve universal recognition."

Britain, on the one hand, he says, has few equals in documentary production, while on the other, she has failed to produce financially successful fictional features. The solution obviously lies in developing the work at which we excel. "The amateur", he says, "can get about the job without any interference from anyone. Wherever he lives, the location can be truly portrayed, framing whatever story he wishes to tell."

He warns amateurs:

> "Do not attempt a Chinese melodrama, a Spanish revolution, or a history of Harlem, but keep the story to normal happenings, which will give opportunities to reveal the world around you . . . the director who has trained himself to be an observant documentalist capable of creating exciting non-fictional films out of the material surrounding him, should not change his method of approach one iota when handling fiction. He should set his tale in the village, the town, or the factory, and portray his location with the same vividness as he would if making a purely interest reel."

By doing this, he believes, the amateur will be doing for Britain something which the professional film maker has not yet seen his way to do. In brief, to put Britain on the map. To make films which are original British productions, about British people, against British background.

> "Commercial and climatic reasons are largely responsible for all films conforming, more or less, to the same studio methods," he says, "but the group which breaks away from all that kind of thing is bound to win success, just as Britain would have done, had she not imitated, in detail, the production methods of Hollywood, which have resulted in films being produced in Britain, as distinct from British films, that are but pale replicas of American productions."

Mr. Buchanan treats his whole subject from the creative, rather than the technical side. He outlines, in his first chapters, the whole process of film making, from the growth of the film idea, scripting, camera work, editing, through to the finished film. When talking about the use of the camera he is thinking in terms of the finished picture, and urges the camera-director, or director to regard his camera as his "mechanical self, to be governed by his brain and his ability as a creative artist. . . ." So with cutting, etc., he urges the responsibility of the director to carry the idea of theme of his film in his mind all the time, and forego all things which detract from the central theme.

Having theorised, Mr. Buchanan gives examples, in chapters, which are reprints of articles used in *World Film News*, and *Amateur Cine World*, about filming a town, a village, a factory, a farm, etc. (They are not, however, examples of his fictional-documentary film plan).

Every amateur should have Mr. Buchanan's book. He will learn much that will be of great value to him, and will surely not fail to be impressed by the sincerity of the author in his frank presentation of the film as it is to-day, what it might be in the future, and the contribution the amateur might make to that future.

*Faber & Faber, 5s.

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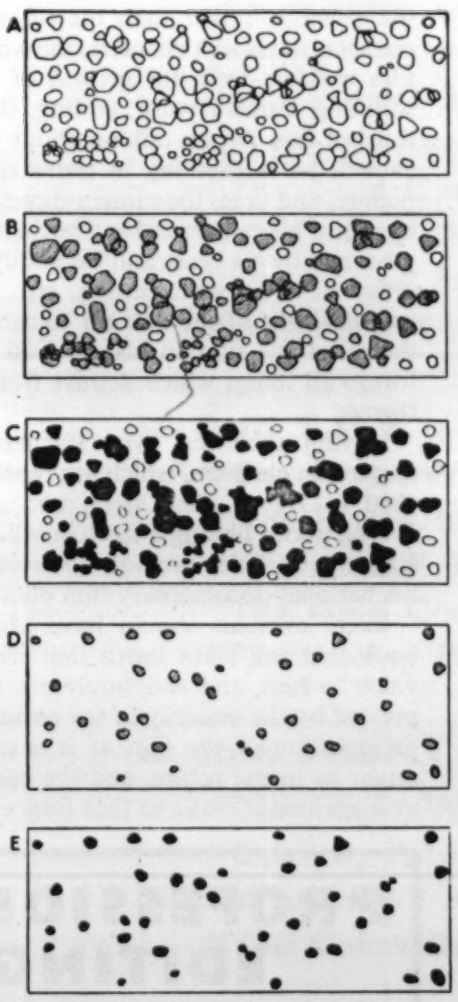

A. *Diagram showing the unexposed grains of silver bromide in the film.*

B. *The largest and most sensitive grains are exposed in the camera.*

C. *The exposed grains are developed to form a negative image.*

D. *The developed grains are removed by a bleaching bath which dissolves silver, leaving the undeveloped grains, which are now exposed.*

E. *These grains are now developed, forming a positive image.*

One big advantage of reversal film is absence of graininess in the positive image. The extreme fineness of grain is a direct result of the *reversal process.*

The following description of the reversal process is given in "Photography" by Dr. C. E. K. Mees, Director of Kodak Research.

"In the *reversal process,* the exposed image is developed, and then the developed silver is dissolved in a *bleaching* bath, which oxidises the silver. This leaves behind the undeveloped silver bromide, which was not affected by the developer because it was not exposed to light. After a fresh exposure to light, this remaining silver bromide is developed in its turn and gives a positive. This is illustrated in the figure, which is a drawing made from pictures taken through the microscope. In Section A, we see the grains of the light-sensitive silver bromide in the emulsion, and in Section B there are marked, by cross-hatching, those which have been affected by light during exposure in the camera. They would not show any change to the eye, of course, because the change by light is not visible. These grains form the latent image. After development, these exposed grains turn into black metallic silver, and this is shown in Section C of the diagram. Then the bleaching bath removes all the silver and leaves behind the silver bromide grains which were not exposed, as shown in Section D. These are re-exposed and developed and make the final positive, as we see in Section E."

. . . .

"The graininess of ordinary negatives is due to the large clumps of silver bromide grains present in the emulsion. These large clumps are more sensitive to light than small clumps or widely separated grains, and, therefore, when a short exposure is given, the large clumps are the first to become exposed. These are removed in the reversal process, and the final image is made up of the grains of the least sensitivity. Since these are the smallest grains and the smallest clumps of grains, *such a direct positive image shows very little graininess.*"

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FILMS YOU WANT TO SEE

"Jew Suss"—distributed by Gebescope

FOR the benefit of students *W.F.N.* has made this month a preliminary examination of the sources of interesting films in this country, and listed a mixed collection as a stimulus to detailed examination of the film catalogues of the sub-standard and specialist libraries.

The investigation reveals at the outset a very healthy collection of films worth studying from historical, technical and other points of view. It shows, for example, that among the cartoons there is some of the early work of Walt Disney and Max Fleischer available in this country. There is also a fair collection of those early classics mentioned in every reference book on the history of film, for example: *The Covered Wagon*, *Vaudeville*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari;* a number of important continental films including *Dr. Mabuse*, *The Blue Light* and Starewitch puppet films, and a very good collection of the best Russian films such as *Mother*, *Potemkin*, *Turksib* and *The General Line*.

American comedies and westerns are well represented, among them a great many short Chaplin films, a few Harold Lloyds, Harry Langdons and Laurel and Hardys.

The lists of British films include Hitchcock's *Blackmail* and *The Lodger*, and a number of more recent works such as *Rome Express*, *Friday the 13th*, *Jew Suss* and *Man of Aran*. Technical and documentary films are featured and the lists of Gebescope enter the Face of Britain series, Paul Rotha's *Shipyard* and the technical films *How Talkies Talk* and *Cathode Ray Oscillograph*.

An interesting find for the student of diagrammatic work is the existence of some Marcel de Hubsch three-minute films re-edited in silent form. There are also English versions of the two Swedish films *Gentlemen in Top Hats and Gentlemen in Crowns* and *Igloo*. The former is a survey of the political lay-out of Europe before and after the Great War.

Necessarily most of the films listed here are silent; all of them are not available on a range of projector sizes. Additional information is of course available on the original catalogues which to the discerning will probably provide a great deal more interest than the appended selection.

It is hoped to add to the data collected here and publish from time to time additions to the list.

Butcher's Film Service, 175 Wardour Street, W.1.
The Testament of Dr. Mabuse (Fritz Lang).
War is Hell.
L'Ordonnance.
The Mascot (Starewitch).
The Ringmaster (Starewitch).

Kodascope, Kodak Ltd., Kingsway, W.C.2. **(8 mm.)**
Grass (Meriam C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack).
Fish from Hell.
Anchors Aweigh.
Charlie Chaplin shorts.
Harold Lloyd short comedies.
With Love and Hisses (Laurel and Hardy).
Knock Out Buster (Buster Brown).
Feet of Mud (Harry Langdon).
Saturday Afternoon (Harry Langdon).
The Saw Mill (Larry Semon).
We're in the Navy Now (Wallace Beery).
Oswald the Rabbit Series (Walt Disney).
Out of the Inkwell Series (Max Fleischer).
Felix Series (Pat Sullivan).
The Pony Express (Ricardo Cortez).
The Covered Wagon (James Cruze).
The Lost World.
Various Westerns.

Kodascope, 16 mm.
Our Gang comedies.
Chaplin shorts.
Harold Lloyd comedies.
Laurel and Hardy comedies.
Harry Langdon comedies.
Will Rogers Westerns.
Mack Sennett comedies.
Early comedies with Reginald Denny, Edward Everett Horton, George Sidney and Charles Murray.
Behind the Front (Wallace Beery and Raymond Hatton).
We're in the Navy Now.
Hands Up (Raymond Griffith).
Felix, Out-of-the-Inkwell and Oswald the Rabbit cartoons.
Livingstone.
Blackmail.
Piccadilly.
The Ring.
The Lodger.
The Informer (Lya da Putti).
Guns of Loos.
The Americano (Douglas Fairbanks).
The Lost World.
Hell's Heroes.
The Covered Wagon.
The Pony Express.

Educational and General Services, 37 Golden Square, W.1. **(16 mm. silent).**
Gentlemen in Top Hats and Gentlemen in Crowns.
Arabia and Islam (Atlantic Films 3-minute short).
A Journey Round the Moon (Atlantic Films 3-minute short).
The Solar System.
Igloo.
David Livingstone.

Gebescope, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.
Rome Express.
Friday the 13th.
The Good Companions.
I Was a Spy.
The Constant Nymph.
Man of Aran (Flaherty).
The Lodger (Hitchcock).
Jew Suss.
The Man Who Knew Too Much.
Emil and the Detectives.
The Clairvoyant.
The Thirty-nine Steps.
Devil Dancers of Sikkim.
How Talkies Talk.
Cathode Ray Oscillograph.
Shipyard (Paul Rotha).
The Face of Britain Series.
Secrets of Life Series.

International Sound Films, 1 Millman Street, W.C.1.
The Road to Life (Nikolai Ekk—Russian).
War is Hell.
Enough to Eat (English short film).
Housing Problems (English short film).

Kino Films, 84 Gray's Road, W.C.1.
Battleship Potemkin (Eisenstein).
The Ghost That Never Returns (Alexander Room).
The General Line (Eisenstein).
The End of St. Petersburg (Pudovkin).
Mother.
Turksib (Victor Turin).
Hell Unlimited.
Storm Over Asia (Pudovkin).
Ten Days That Shook the World (Eisenstein).
War is Hell (Victor Trivas).

Kinograph Distributors, 191 Wardour Street.
Gentlemen in Top Hats and Gentlemen in Crowns.
Various British documentaries.

Pathescope, 10 Gt. Marlborough Street, W.1. **(9.5 mm.)**
The Lion of the Moguls (Ivan Mosjoukine).
Vaudeville (Emil Jannings, directed by Dupont).
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Robert Wiene).
Faust (Emil Jannings).
Metropolis (Brigitte Helm).
The Count of Monte Cristo.
Les Miserables.
Blackmail (Alfred Hitchcock).
The Ring (Alfred Hitchcock).
Piccadilly (Dupont).
The Informer (Lars Hansen and Lya da Putti).
White Hell of Pitz Palu (Pabst).
Q Ships.
Orphans of the Storm (D. W. Griffith).
Lorna Doone (John Loder and Victoria Hopper).
Various early Disneys.
Various early Harold Lloyd comedies.
Various early Chaplins including: *The Water Cure* and *Easy Street*.
Various Our Gang comedies.

M.A.G.

Technical Tit-Bits

by DAVID MYERS

"J.T." of Liverpool, asks:

"How can I determine the necessary size of a cinema screen for a hall with certain measurements?"

The size of the screen to accommodate the rear seats should have a width equal to one-sixth of the distance from those seats to the screen. Therefore if the distance is 72 feet a screen with a width of 12 feet would be necessary.

The distance from the screen to the front row of seats should be at least 1.5 times the screen's width, and not more than 45 degrees from the line of sight to the top of the screen.

Excessive magnification is objectional as this brings out the imperfections of the emulsion and film base grain, and is unnatural.

Distortion is caused by any one of the following, or may be combined: the projection angle, the viewing angle, or the discrepancy between the camera point of view and that of the audiences.

The angle of projection is, however, the most pronounced, due to the fact that often for no other reason than one of architectural vanity, the projection room (the heart of every cinema) is pushed up as far as possible into the roof, therefore projecting down to the screen at an acute angle. When pictures are projected at steep angles the bottom of the image is magnified more than the top, the result being a "keystone" effect, the lines becoming convergent upwards instead of being vertical.

Correction is commonly effected by tilting the screen to the desired angle to meet the projected rays, or by masking over the broadest part of the picture with black drape so as to square the picture.

A rectangular shape can, however, be maintained, irrespective of projection angle, by having special aperture plates cut, these being distorted in shape sufficiently to allow for correction when the rays meet the screen.

This practice was actually adopted at the Plaza Theatre, Piccadilly, London, some years ago, where the picture was projected on a steep angle to a perfectly straight screen without any distortion.

It may be said that this method must produce an out of focus effect, and whilst this *is* right, the spread over on a large area of screen is hardly noticeable, and in fact this would appear to be the best means.

Distortion, of course, depends upon the position from which the screen is viewed, but the general aim is to provide the maximum number of seats in the higher priced region with the best picture; all cannot be served alike in the modern super cinema, unless the place is long and narrow and without balconies.

Cinema projection is an art, and as such, should not be a mere operation by numbers. True, when the motor is switched on, and the volume control is turned up, the show commences, but that is not all.

Each subject should be treated according to its particular merits: practically all films require the backing of the human element to "put them over." The sound has to be carefully nursed, it can be increased to crescendo to heighten the effect of an oncoming train, or, the foreseen climax to a comical situation can be saved by raising the volume so that the final sentence can be heard above the roar of laughter. One learns to anticipate the reactions of an audience, one can evoke spontaneous effect by the manipulation of the controls at the psychological moment—too late or too soon, and the effort is spoilt.

It must be remembered that the recording engineers are not able to anticipate the volume of laughter that certain situations are likely to create, or of the noises in the theatre that may drown that pathetic sob that means so much.

I have in mind the great success that attended my own efforts a few years back, when, with a simple two-reeler featuring Louis Simon and George Lemaire in *The Dentists*, the effects were so much heightened by the sound effects, that the film was rebooked on three subsequent occasions. The climax in this instance centred around the extraction of teeth, when the groans of the patient were over-amplified as likewise were the extracted teeth being dropped into the basin with a loud PLICK, which just caused riots of prolonged laughter.

Yes, one can play on the emotions of a cinema audience by the careful handling of sound alone, but one has to anticipate, and to work slightly, ever so slightly, *ahead* of the audience reactions. This is what is commonly termed "showmanship."

A reader asks, "Where can I obtain a technical course on talking picture engineering?"

I would suggest the course be taken through the British Institute of Engineering Technology of 17 to 19 Stratford Place, London, W.1.

The course, including all text books, lessons, unlimited tuition, instruments, instructions, guarantee and award of final examination diploma, is £11, or £12 10s. by equal instalments. The course covers practical mathematics, optics, acoustics, magnetism and electricity, alternating and direct current circuits, amplifier design and theory, principles of rectification, impedance matching, photo-cell and "pick-up" equipment, sound recording, sound picture photography, sound reproducing systems, operation and maintenance of reproducing systems, troubles and their causes and clearance, etc., etc.

But the G.P.O. Film Unit holds the record for expert practical training, where Post Office engineers are trained in all branches and turned out experts in projection and maintenance in the space of three weeks. But unfortunately this service is not available for members of the public.

* * *

In answer to a general question raised—16 mm. cameras of good quality can be purchased from £20 upwards, and a really good silent projector for use with Film Societies can be purchased from £50 upwards. Write to David Myers about it, and he will settle your problems in the stamped addressed envelope which you must enclose.

* * *

The most important part of a film from the operator's point of view should be the "leader." The leader being that part of the film that precedes the main title. Film breaks and "run off's" at the commencement of a show can be directly blamed to the bad condition of the leader. Keep the leader in perfect trim, then your troubles of yesterday will spell success for to-day.

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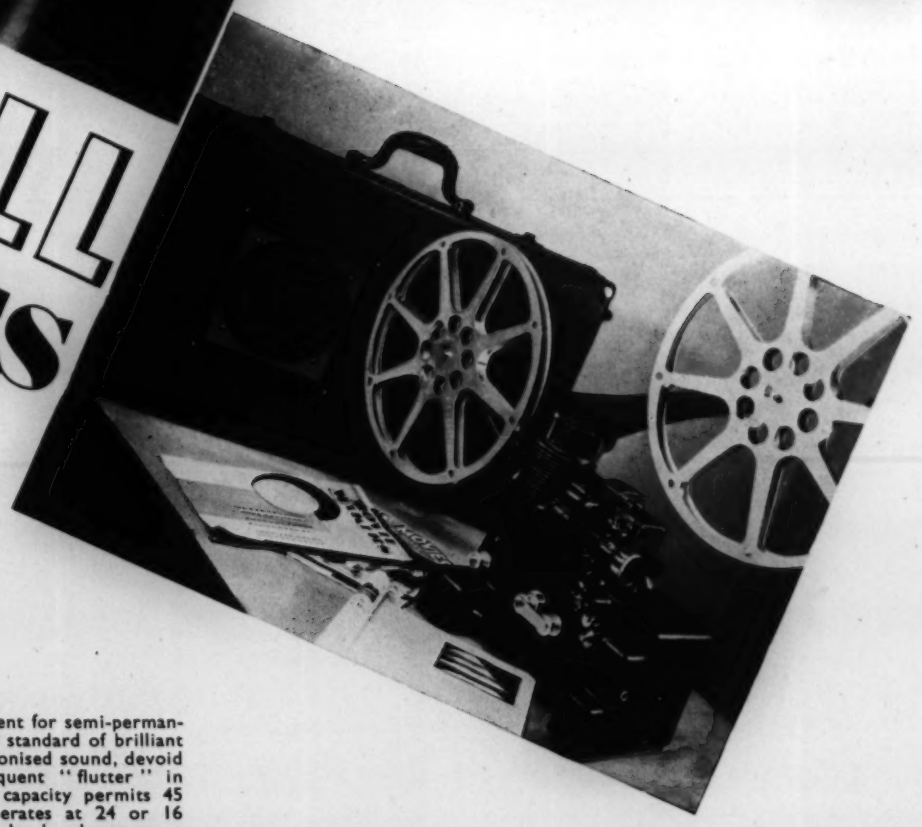

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